

**GREEN'S HISTORY
OF THE
ENGLISH PEOPLE**



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A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

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COMPLETE IN TEN VOLUMES



VOLUME III

1307-1461

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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

BOOK IV.

THE PARLIAMENT.

(1307-1461.)

AUTHORITIES FOR BOOK IV.

294. FOR Edward the Second we have three important contemporaries: Thomas de la More, Troke-lowe's annals, and the life by a monk of Malmesbury, printed by Hearne. The sympathies of the first are with the king, those of the last two with the barons. Murimuth's short chronicle is also contemporary. John Barbour's "Bruce," the great legendary storehouse for his hero's adventures, is historically worthless.

295. Important as it is, the reign of Edward the Third is by no means fortunate in its annalists. The concluding part of the chronicle of Walter of Hemingford or Heminburgh seems to have been jotted down as news of the passing events reached its author; it ends at the battle of Crécy. Hearne has published another contemporary account, that of Robert of Avesbury, which closes in 1356. A third account by Knyghton, a canon of Leicester, will be found in the collection of Twysden. At the end of this cen-

tury and the beginning of the next the annals which had been carried on in the Abbey of St. Albans were thrown together by Walsingham in the "*Historia Angelicana*" which bears his name, a compilation whose history may be found in the prefaces to the "*Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*," issued in the Rolls Series. An anonymous chronicler whose work is printed in the 22d volume of the "*Archæologia*" has given us the story of the Good Parliament, another account is preserved in the "*Chronica Angliæ* from 1328 to 1388," published in the Rolls Series, and fresh light has been recently thrown on the time by the publication of a chronicle by Adam of Usk, which extends from 1377 to 1404. Fortunately the scantiness of historical narrative is compensated by the growing fullness and abundance of our state papers. Rymer's *Fœdera* is rich in diplomatic and other documents for this period, and from this time we have a storehouse of political and social information in the Parliamentary Rolls.

296. For the French war itself our primary authority is the chronicle of Jehan le Bel, a canon of the church of St. Lambert of Liége, who himself served in Edward's campaign against the Scots, and spent the rest of his life at the court of John of Hainault. Up to the treaty of Bretigny, where it closes, Froissart has done little more than copy this work, making, however, large additions from his own inquiries, especially in the Flemish and Breton campaigns and in the account of Crécy. Froissart was himself a Hainaulter of Valenciennes; he held a post in Queen Philippa's household from 1361 to 1369, and

under this influence produced in 1373 the first edition of his well-known chronicle. A later edition is far less English in tone, and a third version, begun by him in his old age after long absence from England, is distinctly French in its sympathies. Froissart's vivacity and picturesqueness blind us to the inaccuracy of his details; as an historical authority he is of little value. The "*Fasciculi Zizaniorum*," in the Rolls Series, with the documents appended to it, is a work of primary authority for the history of Wycliffe and his followers: a selection from his English tracts has been made by Mr. T. Arnold for the university of Oxford, which has also published his "*Trias*." The version of the Bible that bears his name has been edited with a valuable preface by the Rev. J. Forshall and Sir F. Madden. William Longland's poem, "*The Complaint of Piers the Plowman*" (edited by Mr. Skeat for the Early English Text Society), throws a flood of light on the social state of England after the treaty of Breigny.

297. The "*Annals of Richard the Second and Henry the Fourth*," now published by the Master of the Rolls, are our main authority for the period which follows Edward's death. They serve as the basis of the St. Albans compilation which bears the name of Walsingham, and from which the "*Life of Richard*," by a monk of Evesham, is for the most part derived. The same violent Lancastrian sympathy runs through Walsingham and the fifth book of Knyghton's chronicle. The French authorities, on the other hand, are vehemently on Richard's side.

Froissart, who ends at this time, is supplemented by the metrical history of Creton (*"Archæologia,"* vol. xx.), and by the *"Chronique de la Traïson et Mort de Richart"* (English Historical Society), both works of French authors, and published in France in the time of Henry the Fourth, probably with the aim of arousing French feeling against the house of Lancaster and the war policy which it had revived. The popular feeling in England may be seen in *"Political Songs from Edward III. to Richard III."* (Rolls Series). A poem on *"The Deposition of Richard II.,"* which has been published by the Camden Society, is now ascribed to William Longland.

298. With Henry the Fifth our historic materials become more abundant. We have the *"Acta Henrici Quinti,"* by Titus Livius, a chaplain in the royal army; a life by Elmham, Prior of Lenton, simpler in style but identical in arrangement and facts with the former work; a biography by Robert Redman; a metrical chronicle by Elmham (published in Rolls Series in *"Memorials of Henry the Fifth"*); and the meager chronicles of Hardyng and Otterbourne. The king's Norman campaigns may be studied in M. Puisseux's *"Siège de Rouen"* (Caen, 1867). The *"Wars of the English in France"* and Blondel's work, *"De Reductione Normanniæ"* (both in Rolls Series), give ample information on the military side of this and the next reign. But with the accession of Henry the Sixth we again enter on a period of singular dearth in its historical authorities. The *"Procès de Jeanne d'Arc"* (published by the Société de l'Histoire de France) is the only real authority

for her history. For English affairs we are reduced to the meager accounts of William of Worcester, of the continuator of the Crowland chronicle, and of Fabyan. Fabyan is a London alderman with a strong bias in favor of the house of Lancaster, and his work is useful for London only. The continuator is one of the best of his class; and though connected with the house of York, the date of his work, which appeared soon after Bosworth Field, makes him fairly impartial; but he is sketchy and deficient in information. The more copious narrative of Polydore Vergil is far superior to these in literary ability, but of later date, and strongly Lancastrian in tone. For the struggle between Edward and Warwick, the valuable narrative of "The Arrival of Edward the Fourth" (Camden Society) may be taken as the official account on the royal side. The Paston letters are the first instance in English history of a family correspondence, and throw great light on the social condition of the time.

CHAPTER I.

EDWARD THE SECOND.

(1307—1327.)

299. IN his calling together the estates of the realm Edward the First determined the course of English history. From the first moment of its appearance the parliament became the center of English affairs. The hundred years, indeed, which

follow its assembly at Westminster saw its rise into a power which checked and overawed the crown.

300. Of the kings in whose reigns the parliament gathered this mighty strength not one was likely to look with indifference on the growth of a rival authority, and the bulk of them were men who in other times would have roughly checked it. What held their hand was the need of the crown. The century and a half that followed the gathering of the estates at Westminster was a time of almost continual war, and of the financial pressure that springs from war. It was, indeed, war that had gathered them. In calling his parliament, Edward the First sought mainly an effective means of procuring supplies for that policy of national consolidation which had triumphed in Wales and which seemed to be triumphing in Scotland. But the triumph in Scotland soon proved a delusive one, and the strife brought wider strifes in its train. When Edward wrung from Balliol an acknowledgment of his suzerainty he foresaw little of the war with France, the war with Spain, the quarrel with the papacy, the upgrowth of social, of political, of religious revolution within England itself, of which that acknowledgment was to be the prelude. But the thicker troubles gathered round England the more the royal treasury was drained, and now that arbitrary taxation was impossible the one means of filling it lay in a summons of the houses. The crown was chained to the parliament by a tie of absolute need. From the first moment of parliamentary existence the life and power of the estates assembled at

Westminster hung on the question of supplies. So long as war went on no ruler could dispense with the grants which fed the war and which parliament alone could afford. But it was impossible to procure supplies save by redressing the grievances of which parliament complained and by granting the powers which parliament demanded. It was in vain that king after king, conscious that war bound them to the parliament, strove to rid themselves of the war. So far was the ambition of our rulers from being the cause of the long struggle, that, save in the one case of Henry the Fifth, the desperate effort of every ruler was to arrive at peace. Forced as they were to fight, their restless diplomacy strove to draw from victory as from defeat a means of escape from the strife that was enslaving the crown. The royal council, the royal favorites, were always on the side of peace. But, fortunately for English freedom, peace was impossible. The pride of the English people, the greed of France, foiled every attempt at accommodation. The wisest ministers sacrificed themselves in vain. King after king patched up truces which never grew into treaties, and concluded marriages which brought fresh discord instead of peace. War went ceaselessly on, and with the march of war went on the ceaseless growth of the parliament.

301. The death of Edward the First arrested only for a moment the advance of his army to the north. The Earl of Pembroke led it across the border, and found himself master of the country without a blow. Bruce's career became that of a desperate adventurer, for even the Highland chiefs in whose fastnesses he

found shelter were bitterly hostile to one who claimed to be king of their foes in the Lowlands. It was this adversity that transformed the murderer of Comyn into the noble leader of a nation's cause. Strong and of commanding presence, brave and genial in temper, Bruce bore the hardships of his career with a courage and hopefulness that never failed. In the legends that clustered round his name we see him listening in Highland glens to the bay of the bloodhounds on his track, or holding a pass single-handed against a crowd of savage clansmen. Sometimes the small band which clung to him were forced to support themselves by hunting and fishing, sometimes to break up for safety as their enemies tracked them to their lair. Bruce himself had more than once to fling off his coat-of-mail and scramble barefoot for very life up the crags. Little by little, however, the dark sky cleared. The English pressure relaxed. James Douglas, the darling of Scottish story, was the first of the Lowland barons to rally to the Bruce, and his daring gave heart to the king's cause. Once he surprised his own house, which had been given to an Englishman, ate the dinner which was prepared for its new owner, slew his captives, and tossed their bodies on to a pile of wood at the castle gate. Then he staved in the wine-vats that the wine might mingle with their blood, and set house and wood-pile on fire.

302. A ferocity like this degraded everywhere the work of freedom; but the revival of the country went steadily on. Pembroke and the English forces were in fact paralyzed by a strife which had broken

out in England between the new king and his baronage. The moral purpose which had raised his father to grandeur was wholly wanting in Edward the Second; he was showy, idle, and stubborn in temper; but he was far from being destitute of the intellectual quickness which seemed inborn in the Plantagenets. He had no love for his father, but he had seen him in the later years of his reign struggling against the pressure of the baronage, evading his pledges as to taxation, and procuring absolution from his promise to observe the clauses added to the charter. The son's purpose was the same, that of throwing off what he looked on as the yoke of the baronage; but the means by which he designed to bring about his purpose was the choice of a minister wholly dependent on the crown. We have already noticed the change by which the "clerks of the king's chapel," who had been the ministers of arbitrary government under the Norman and Angevin sovereigns, had been quietly superseded by the prelates and lords of the continual council. At the close of the late reign a direct demand on the part of the barons to nominate the great officers of state had been curtly rejected; but the royal choice had been practically limited in the selection of its ministers to the class of prelates and nobles, and however closely connected with royalty they might be, such officers always to a great extent shared the feelings and opinions of their order. The aim of the young king seems to have been to undo the change which had been silently brought about, and to imitate the policy of the contemporary sovereigns of France by choosing as his

ministers men of an inferior position, wholly dependent on the crown for their power, and representatives of nothing but the policy and interests of their master. Piers Gaveston, a foreigner sprung from a family of Guienne, had been his friend and companion during his father's reign, at the close of which he had been banished from the realm for his share in intrigues which divided Edward from his son. At the accession of the new king he was at once recalled, created Earl of Cornwall, and placed at the head of the administration. When Edward crossed the sea to wed Isabella of France, the daughter of Philip the Fair—a marriage planned by his father to provide against any further intervention of France in his difficulties with Scotland—the new minister was left as regent in his room. The offense given by this rapid promotion was embittered by his personal temper. Gay, genial, thriftless, Gaveston showed in his first acts the quickness and audacity of southern Gaul. The older ministers were dismissed, all claims of precedence or inheritance were set aside in the distribution of offices at the coronation, while taunts and defiances goaded the proud baronage to fury. The favorite was a fine soldier, and his lance unhorsed his opponents in tourney after tourney. His reckless wit flung nicknames about the court; the Earl of Lancaster was "the Actor," Pembroke "the Jew," Warwick "the Black Dog." But taunt and defiance broke helplessly against the iron mass of the baronage. After a few months of power the formal demand of the parliament for his dismissal could not be resisted, and in May, 1308, Gaveston was formally banished from the realm.

303. But Edward was far from abandoning his favorite. In Ireland he was unfettered by the baronage, and here Gaveston found a refuge as the king's lieutenant while Edward sought to obtain his recall by the intervention of France and the papacy. But the financial pressure of the Scotch war again brought the king and his parliament together in the spring of 1309. It was only by conceding the rights which his father had sought to establish of imposing import duties on the merchants by their own assent that he procured a subsidy. The firmness of the baronage sprang from their having found a head. In no point had the policy of Henry the Third more utterly broken down than in his attempt to weaken the power of the nobles by filling the great earldoms with kinsmen of the royal house. He had made Simon of Montfort his brother-in-law only to furnish a leader to the nation in the Barons' war. In loading his second son, Edmund Crouchback, with honors and estates he raised a family to greatness which overawed the crown. Edmund had been created Earl of Lancaster; after Evesham, he had received the forfeited earldom of Leicester; he had been made Earl of Derby on the extinction of the house of Ferrers. His son, Thomas of Lancaster, was the son-in-law of Henry de Lacy, and was soon to add to these lordships the earldom of Lincoln. And to the weight of these great baronies was added his royal blood. The farther of Thomas had been a titular king of Sicily. His mother was dowager queen of Navarre. His half-sister by the mother's side was wife of the French King Philip le Bel, and

mother of the English Queen Isabella. He was himself a grandson of Henry the Third, and not far from the succession to the throne. Had Earl Thomas been a wiser and a nobler man, his adhesion to the cause of the baronage might have guided the king into a really national policy. As it was, his weight proved irresistible. When Edward, at the close of the parliament, recalled Gaveston, the Earl of Lancaster withdrew from the royal council, and a parliament, which met in the spring of 1310, resolved that the affairs of the realm should be intrusted for a year to a body of twenty-one "ordainers," with Archbishop Winchelsey at their head.

304. Edward, with Gaveston, withdrew sullenly to the north. A triumph in Scotland would have given him strength to baffle the ordainers, but he had little of his father's military skill, the wasted country made it hard to keep an army together, and after a fruitless campaign he fell back to his southern realm to meet the parliament of 1311 and the "ordinances" which the twenty-one laid before it. By this long and important statute, Gaveston was banished, other advisers were driven from the council, and the Florentine bankers whose loans had enabled Edward to hold the baronage at bay, sent out of the realm. The customs duties imposed by Edward the First were declared to be illegal. Its administrative provisions showed the relations which the barons sought to establish between the new parliament and the crown. Parliaments were to be called every year, and in these assemblies the king's servants were to be brought, if need were, to justice. The

great officers of state were to be appointed with the counsel and consent of the baronage, and to be sworn in parliament. The same consent of the barons in parliament was to be needful ere the king could declare war or absent himself from the realm. As the ordinances show, the baronage still looked on parliament rather as a political organization of the nobles than as a gathering of the three estates of the realm. The lower clergy pass unnoticed; the commons are regarded as mere taxpayers, whose part was still confined to the presentation of petitions of grievances and the grant of money. But even in this imperfect fashion the parliament was a real representation of the country. The barons no longer depended for their force on the rise of some active leader, or gathered in exceptional assemblies to wrest reforms from the crown by threat of war. Their action was made regular and legal. Even if the commons took little part in forming decisions, their force when formed hung on the assent of the knights and burgesses to them; and the grant which alone could purchase from the crown the concessions which the baronage demanded lay absolutely within the control of the third estate. It was this which made the king's struggles so fruitless. He assented to the ordinances, and then withdrawing to the north recalled Gaveston and annulled them. But Winchelsey excommunicated the favorite, and the barons, gathering in arms, besieged him in Scarborough. His surrender in May, 1312, ended the strife. The "Black Dog" of Warwick had sworn that the favorite should feel his teeth; and Gaveston flung him-

self in vain at the feet of the Earl of Lancaster, praying for pity "from his gentle lord." In defiance of the terms of his capitulation he was beheaded on Blacklow Hill.

305. The king's burst of grief was as fruitless as his threats of vengeance: a feigned submission of the conquerors completed the royal humiliation, and the barons knelt before Edward in Westminster Hall to receive a pardon which seemed the death-blow of the royal power. But if Edward was powerless to conquer the baronage, he could still, by evading the observances of the ordinances, throw the whole realm into confusion. The two years that follow Gaveston's death are among the darkest in our history. A terrible succession of famines intensified the suffering which sprang from the utter absence of all rule, as dissension raged between the barons and the king. At last a common peril drew both parties together. The Scots had profited by the English troubles, and Bruce's "harrying of Buchan" after his defeat of its earl, who had joined the English army, fairly turned the tide of success in his favor. Edinburgh, Roxburgh, Perth, and most of the Scotch fortresses fell one by one into King Robert's hands. The clergy met in council and owned him as their lawful lord. Gradually the Scotch barons who still held to the English cause were coerced into submission, and Bruce found himself strong enough to invest Stirling, the last and the most important of the Scotch fortresses which held out for Edward. Stirling was, in fact, the key of Scotland, and its danger roused England out of its civil strife to an

effort for the recovery of its prey. At the close of 1313, Edward recognized the ordinances, and a liberal grant from the parliament enabled him to take the field. Lancaster, indeed, still held aloof, on the ground that the king had not sought the assent of parliament to the war, but 30,000 men followed Edward to the north, and a host of wild marauders were summoned from Ireland and Wales. The army which Bruce gathered to oppose this inroad was formed almost wholly of footmen, and was stationed to the south of Stirling, on a rising ground flanked by a little brook, the Bannockburn, which gave its name to the engagement. The battle took place on the 24th of June, 1314. Again two systems of warfare were brought face to face as they had been brought at Falkirk, for Robert, like Wallace, drew up his forces in hollow squares or circles of spearmen. The English were dispirited at the very outset by the failure of an attempt to relieve Stirling and by the issue of a single combat between Bruce and Henry de Bohun, a knight who bore down upon him as he was riding peacefully along the front of his army. Robert was mounted on a small hackney, and held only a light battle-axe in his hand, but warding off his opponent's spear he cleft his skull with so terrible a blow that the handle of his axe was shattered in his grasp. At the opening of the battle, the English archers were thrown forward to rake the Scottish squares, but they were without support, and were easily dispersed by a handful of horse whom Bruce held in reserve for the purpose. The body of men-at-arms next flung themselves on the

Scottish front, but their charge was embarrassed by the narrow space along which the line was forced to move, and the steady resistance of the squares soon threw the knighthood into disorder. "The horses that were stickit," says an exulting Scotch writer, "rushed and reeled right rudely." In the moment of failure the sight of a body of camp-followers, whom they mistook for reinforcements to the enemy, spread panic through the English host. It broke in a headlong rout. Its thousands of brilliant horsemen were soon floundering in pits which guarded the level ground to Bruce's left, or riding in wild haste for the border. Few, however, were fortunate enough to reach it. Edward himself, with a body of 500 knights, succeeded in escaping to Dunbar and the sea. But the flower of his knighthood fell into the hands of the victors, while the Irishry and the footmen were ruthlessly cut down by the country folk as they fled. For centuries to come, the rich plunder of the English camp left its traces on the treasure-rolls and the vestment-rolls of castle and abbey throughout the Lowlands.

306. Bannockburn left Bruce the master of Scotland; but terrible as the blow was, England could not humble herself to relinquish her claim on the Scottish crown. Edward was eager indeed for a truce, but with equal firmness Bruce refused all negotiation while the royal title was withheld from him, and steadily pushed on the recovery of his southern dominions. His progress was unhindered. Bannockburn left Edward powerless, and Lancaster at the head of the Ordainers became supreme. But

it was still impossible to trust the king or to act with him, and in the dead-lock of both parties the Scots plundered as they would. Their ravages in the north brought shame on England such as it had never known. At last Bruce's capture of Berwick in the spring of 1318 forced the king to give way. The ordinances were formally accepted, an amnesty granted, and a small number of peers belonging to the barons' party added to the great officers of state. Had a statesman been at the head of the baronage, the weakness of Edward might have now been turned to good purpose. But the character of the Earl of Lancaster seems to have fallen far beneath the greatness of his position. Distrustful of his cousin, yet himself incapable of governing, he stood sullenly aloof from the royal council and the royal armies, and Edward was able to lay his failure in recovering Berwick during the campaign of 1319 to the earl's charge. His influence over the country was sensibly weakened; and in this weakness the new advisers on whom the king was leaning saw a hope of destroying his power. These were a younger and elder Hugh Le Despenser, son and grandson of the justiciar who had fallen beside Earl Simon at Evesham. Greedy and ambitious as they may have been, they were able men, and their policy was of a higher stamp than the willful defiance of Gaveston. It lay, if we may gather it from the faint indications which remain, in a frank recognition of the power of the three estates as opposed to the separate action of the baronage. The rise of the younger Hugh, on whom the king bestowed the

county of Glamorgan with the hand of one of its co-heiresses, a daughter of Earl Gilbert of Gloucester, was rapid enough to excite general jealousy; and in 1321 Lancaster found little difficulty in extorting by force of arms his exile from the kingdom. But the tide of popular sympathy was already wavering, and it was turned to the royal cause by an insult offered to the queen, against whom Lady Badlesmere closed the doors of Ledes castle. The unexpected energy shown by Edward in avenging this insult gave fresh strength to his cause. At the opening of 1322 he found himself strong enough to recall Despenser, and when Lancaster convoked the baronage to force him again into exile, the weakness of their party was shown by some negotiations into which the earl entered with the Scots and by his precipitate retreat to the north on the advance of the royal army. At Boroughbridge his forces were arrested and dispersed, and Thomas himself, brought captive before Edward at Pontefract, was tried and condemned to death as a traitor. "Have mercy on me, King of Heaven," cried Lancaster, as, mounted on a gray pony without a bridle, he was hurried to execution, "for my earthly king has forsaken me." His death was followed by that of a number of his adherents and by the captivity of others, while a parliament at York annulled the proceedings against the Despensers and repealed the ordinances.

307. It is to this parliament, however, and perhaps to the victorious confidence of the royalists, that we owe the famous provision which reveals the policy of the Despensers, the provision that all laws concerning

“the estate of our lord the king and his heirs or for the estate of the realm and the people shall be treated, accorded, and established in parliaments by our lord the king and by the consent of the prelates, earls, barons, and commonalty of the realm according as hath been hitherto accustomed.” It would seem from the tenor of this remarkable enactment that much of the sudden revulsion of popular feeling had been owing to the assumption of all legislative action by the baronage alone. The same policy was seen in a re-issue in the form of a royal ordinance of some of the most beneficial provisions of the ordinances which had been formally repealed. But the arrogance of the Despensers gave new offense, and the utter failure of a fresh campaign against Scotland again weakened the crown. The barbarous forays in which the borderers under Earl Douglas were wasting Northumberland woke a general indignation, and a grant from the parliament at York enabled Edward to march with a great army to the north. But Bruce as of old declined an engagement till the wasted lowlands starved the invaders into a ruinous retreat. The failure forced England in the spring of 1323 to stoop to a truce for thirteen years, in the negotiation of which Bruce was suffered to take the royal title. We see in this act of the Despensers the first of a series of such attempts by which minister after minister strove to free the crown from the bondage under which the war pressure laid it to the growing power of parliament; but it ended, as these after-attempts ended, only in the ruin of the counselors who planned it. The pride of the coun-

try had been aroused by the struggle, and the humiliation of such a truce robbed the crown of its temporary popularity. It led the way to the sudden catastrophe which closed this disastrous reign.

308. In his struggle with the Scots, Edward, like his father, had been hampered not only by internal divisions but by the harassing intervention of France. The rising under Bruce had been backed by French aid as well as by a revival of the old quarrel over Guienne, and on the accession of Charles the Fourth in 1322 a demand of homage for Ponthieu and Gascony called Edward over sea. But the Despensers dared not let him quit the realm, and a fresh dispute as to the right of possession in the Agenois brought about the seizure of the bulk of Gascony by a sudden attack on the part of the French. The quarrel verged upon open war, and to close it Edward's queen, Isabella, a sister of the French king, undertook in 1325 to revisit her home and bring about a treaty of peace between the two countries. Isabella hated the Despensers; she was alienated from her husband; but hatred and alienation were as yet jealously concealed. At the close of the year the terms of peace seemed to be arranged; and though declining to cross the sea, Edward evaded the difficulty created by the demand for personal homage by investing his son with the duchies of Aquitaine and Gascony, and dispatching him to join his mother at Paris.⁹ The boy did homage to King Charles for the two duchies, the question of the Agenois being reserved for legal decision, and Edward at once recalled his wife and son to England.

Neither threats nor prayers, however, could induce either wife or child to return to his court. Roger Mortimer, the most powerful of the Marcher barons and a deadly foe to the Despensers, had taken refuge in France; and his influence over the queen made her the center of a vast conspiracy. With the young Edward in her hands she was able to procure soldiers from the Count of Hainault by promising her son's hand to his daughter; the Italian bankers supplied funds; and after a year's preparation the queen set sail in the autumn of 1326. A secret conspiracy of the baronage was revealed when the primate and nobles hurried to her standard on her landing at Orwell. Deserted by all and repulsed by the citizens of London, whose aid he implored, the king fled hastily to the west and embarked with the Despensers for Lundy island, which Despenser had fortified as a possible refuge; but contrary winds flung him again on the Welsh coast, where he fell into the hands of Earl Henry of Lancaster, the brother of the earl whom they had slain. The younger Despenser, who accompanied him, was at once hung on a gibbet fifty feet high, and the king placed in ward at Kenilworth till his fate could be decided by a parliament summoned for that purpose at Westminster in January, 1327.

309. The peers who assembled fearlessly revived the constitutional usage of the earlier English freedom, and asserted their right to depose a king who had proved himself unworthy to rule. Not a voice was raised in Edward's behalf, and only four prelates protested when the young prince was proclaimed

king by acclamation and presented as their sovereign to the multitudes without. The revolution took legal form in a bill which charged the captive monarch with indolence, incapacity, the loss of Scotland, the violation of his coronation oath, and oppression of the church and baronage; and on the approval of this it was resolved that the reign of Edward of Caernarvon had ceased, and that the crown had passed to his son, Edward of Windsor. A deputation of the parliament proceeded to Kenilworth to procure the assent of the discrowned king to his own deposition, and Edward, "clad in a plain black gown," bowed quietly to his fate. Sir William Trussel at once addressed him in words which, better than any other, mark the nature of the step which the parliament had taken. "I, William Trussel, proctor of the earls, barons, and others, having for this full and sufficient power, do render and give back to you, Edward, once King of England, the homage and fealty of the persons named in my procuracy; and acquit and discharge them thereof in the best manner that law and custom will give. And I now make protestation in their name that they will no longer be in your fealty and allegiance, nor claim to hold anything of you as king, but will account you hereafter as a private person, without any manner of royal dignity." A significant act followed these emphatic words. Sir Thomas Blount, the steward of the household, broke his staff of office, a ceremony used only at a king's death, and declared that all persons engaged in the royal service were discharged. The act of Blount was only an

omen of the fate which awaited the miserable king. In the following September he was murdered in Berkeley Castle.

CHAPTER II.

EDWARD THE THIRD

(1327—1347.)

310. THE deposition of Edward the Second proclaimed to the world the power which the English Parliament had gained. In thirty years from their first assembly at Westminster, the estates had wrested from the crown the last relic of arbitrary taxation, had forced on it new ministers and a new system of government, had claimed a right of confirming the choice of its councilors and of punishing their misconduct, and had established the principle that redress of grievances precedes a grant of supply. Nor had the time been less important in the internal growth of parliament. Step by step the practical sense of the houses themselves completed the work of Edward by bringing about change after change in its composition. The very division into a house of lords and a house of commons formed no part of the original plan of Edward the First; in the earlier parliaments each of the four orders of clergy, barons, knights, and burgesses met, deliberated, and made their grants apart from each other. This isolation, however, of the estates soon showed signs of breaking down. Though the clergy held steadily aloof

from any real union with its fellow-orders, the knights of the shire were drawn by the similarity of their social position into a close connection with the lords. They seem in fact to have been soon admitted by the baronage to an almost equal position with themselves, whether as legislators or counselors of the crown. The burgesses, on the other hand, took little part at first in parliamentary proceedings, save in those which related to the taxation of their class. But their position was raised by the strifes of the reign of Edward the Second when their aid was needed by the baronage in its struggle with the crown; and their right to share fully in all legislative action was asserted in the statute of 1322. From this moment no proceedings can have been considered as formally legislative save those conducted in full parliament of all the estates. In subjects of public policy, however, the barons were still regarded as the sole advisers of the crown, though the knights of the shire were sometimes consulted with them. But the barons and knighthood were not fated to be drawn into a single body whose weight would have given an aristocratic impress to the constitution. Gradually, through causes with which we are imperfectly acquainted, the knights of the shire drifted from their older connection with the baronage into so close and intimate a union with the representatives of the towns that at the opening of the reign of Edward the Third the two orders are found grouped formally together, under the name of "The Commons." It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this change. Had parliament remained

broken up into its four orders of clergy, barons, knights, and citizens, its power would have been neutralized at every great crisis by the jealousies and difficulty of co-operation among its component parts. A permanent union of the knighthood and the baronage, on the other hand, would have converted parliament into the mere representative of an aristocratic caste, and would have robbed it of the strength which it has drawn from its connection with the great body of the commercial classes. The new attitude of the knighthood, their social connection as landed gentry with the baronage, their political union with the burgesses, really welded the three orders into one, and gave that unity of feeling and action to our parliament on which its power has ever since mainly depended.

311. The weight of the two houses was seen in their settlement of the new government by the nomination of a council with Earl Henry of Lancaster at its head. The council had at once to meet fresh difficulties in the north. The truce so recently made ceased legally with Edward's deposition; and the withdrawal of his royal title in further offers of peace warned Bruce of the new temper of the English rulers. Troops gathered on either side, and the English council sought to pave the way for an attack by dividing Scotland against itself. Edward Balliol, a son of the former King John, was solemnly received as a vassal-king of Scotland at the English court. Robert was disabled by leprosy from taking the field in person, but the insult roused him to hurl his marauders again over the border under Douglas

and Sir Thomas Randolph. The Scotch army has been painted for us by an eye-witness whose description is embodied in the work of Jehan le Bel. "It consisted of 4,000 men-at-arms, knights, and esquires, well mounted, besides 20,000 men bold and hardy, armed after the manner of their country, and mounted upon little hackneys that are never tied up or dressed, but turned immediately after the day's march to pasture on the heath or in the fields. . . . They bring no carriages with them, on account of the mountains they have to pass in Northumberland, neither do they carry with them any provisions of bread or wine, for their habits of sobriety are such in time of war that they will live for a long time on flesh half-sodden without bread, and drink the river-water without wine. They have therefore no occasion for pots or pans, for they dress the flesh of the cattle in their skins after they have flayed them, and being sure to find plenty of them in the country which they invade, they carry none with them. Under the flaps of his saddle each man carries a broad piece of metal, behind him a little bag of oatmeal: when they have eaten too much of the sodden flesh and their stomach appears weak and empty, they set this plate over the fire, knead the meal with water, and when the plate is hot put a little of the paste upon it in a thin cake like a biscuit, which they eat to warm their stomachs. It is therefore no wonder that they perform a longer day's march than other soldiers." Though 20,000 horsemen and 40,000 foot marched under their boy-king to protect the border, the English troops were utterly helpless

against such a foe as this. At one time the whole army lost its way in the border wastes; at another all traces of the enemy disappeared, and an offer of knighthood and a hundred marks was made to any one who could tell where the Scots were encamped. But when they were found their position behind the Wear proved unassailable, and, after a bold sally on the English camp, Douglas foiled an attempt at intercepting him by a clever retreat. The English levies broke hopelessly up, and a fresh foray into Northumberland forced the English court in 1328 to submit to peace. By the treaty of Northampton, which was solemnly confirmed by parliament in September, the independence of Scotland was recognized, and Robert Bruce owned as its king. Edward formally abandoned his claim of feudal superiority over Scotland; while Bruce promised to make compensation for the damage done in the north, to marry his son David to Edward's sister Joan, and to restore their forfeited estates to those nobles who had sided with the English king.

312. But the pride of England had been too much roused by the struggle with the Scots to bear this defeat easily, and the first result of the treaty of Northampton was the overthrow of the government which concluded it. This result was hastened by the pride of Roger Mortimer, who was now created Earl of March, and who had made himself supreme through his influence over Isabella and his exclusion of the rest of the nobles from all practical share in the administration of the realm. The first efforts to shake Roger's power were unsuccessful. The Earl

of Lancaster stood, like his brother, at the head of the baronage; the parliamentary settlement at Edward's accession had placed him first in the royal council; and it was to him that the task of defying Mortimer naturally fell. At the close of 1328, therefore, Earl Henry formed a league with the Archbishop of Canterbury and with the young king's uncles, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent, to bring Mortimer to account for the peace with Scotland and the usurpation of the government as well as for the late king's murder, a murder which had been the work of his private partisans and which had profoundly shocked the general conscience. But the young king clave firmly to his mother, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent deserted to Mortimer, and, powerful as it seemed, the league broke up without result. A feeling of insecurity, however, spurred the Earl of March to a bold stroke at his opponents. The Earl of Kent, who was persuaded that his brother, Edward the Second, still lived a prisoner in Corfe Castle, was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to restore him to the throne, tried before a parliament filled with Mortimer's adherents, and sent to the block. But the death of a prince of the royal blood roused the young king to resentment at the greed and arrogance of a minister who treated Edward himself as little more than a state prisoner. A few months after his uncle's execution the king entered the council chamber in Nottingham Castle with a force which he had introduced through a secret passage in the rock on which it stands, and arrested Mortimer with his own hands. A parliament which was at once

summoned condemned the Earl of March to a traitor's death, and in November, 1330, he was beheaded at Tyburn, while the queen-mother was sent for the rest of her life into confinement at Castle Rising.

313. Young as he was, and he had only reached his eighteenth year, Edward at once assumed the control of affairs. His first care was to restore good order throughout the country, which under the late government had fallen into ruin, and to free his hands by a peace with France for further enterprises in the north. A formal peace had been concluded by Isabella after her husband's fall; but the death of Charles the Fourth soon brought about new jealousies between the two courts. The three sons of Philip the Fair had followed him on the throne in succession, but all had now died without male issue, and Isabella, as Philip's daughter, claimed the crown for her son. The claim in any case was a hard one to make out. Though her brothers had left no sons, they had left daughters, and if female succession were admitted, these daughters of Philip's sons would precede a son of Philip's daughter. Isabella met this difficulty by a contention that though females could transmit the right of succession they could not themselves possess it, and that her son, as the nearest living male descendant of Philip the Fair, and born in the life-time of the king from whom he claimed, could claim in preference to females who were related to Philip in as near a degree. But the bulk of French jurists asserted that only male succession gave right to the French throne. On such a theory the right inheritable from Philip

the Fair was exhausted; and the crown passed to the son of Philip's younger brother, Charles of Valois, who in fact peacefully mounted the throne as Philip the Fifth. Purely formal as the claim which Isabella advanced seems to have been, it revived the irritation between the two courts, and though Edward's obedience to a summons which Philip addressed to him to do homage for Aquitaine brought about an agreement that both parties should restore the gains they had made since the last treaty, the agreement was never carried out. Fresh threats of war ended in the conclusion of a new treaty of peace, but the question whether liege or simple homage was due for the duchies remained unsettled when the fall of Mortimer gave the young king full mastery of affairs. His action was rapid and decisive. Clad as a merchant, and with but fifteen horsemen at his back, Edward suddenly made his appearance in 1331 at the French court and did homage as fully as Philip required. The question of the Agenois remained unsettled, though the English parliament insisted that its decision should rest with negotiation and not with war, but on all other points a complete peace was made; and the young king rode back with his hands free for an attack which he was planning on the north.

314. The provisions of the treaty of Northampton for the restitution of estates had never been fully carried out. Till this was done the English court held that the rights of feudal superiority over Scotland which it had yielded in the treaty remained in force; and at this moment an opening seemed to pre-

sent itself for again asserting these rights with success. Fortune seemed at last to have veered to the English side. The death of Robert Bruce only a year after the treaty of Northampton left the Scottish throne to his son David, a child of but eight years old. The death of the king was followed by the loss of Randōlph and Douglas; and the internal difficulties of the realm broke out in civil strife. To the great barons on either side the border the late peace involved serious losses, for many of the Scotch houses held large estates in England as many of the English lords held large estates in Scotland, and although the treaty had provided for their claims, they had in each case been practically set aside. It is this discontent of the barons at the new settlement which explains the sudden success of Edward Balliol in a snatch which he made at the Scottish throne. Balliol's design was known at the English court, where he had found shelter for some years; and Edward, whether sincerely or no, forbade his barons from joining him, and posted troops on the border to hinder his crossing it. But Balliol found little difficulty in making his attack by sea. He sailed from England at the head of a body of nobles who claimed estates in the north, landed in August, 1332, on the shores of Fife, and after repulsing with immense loss an army which attacked him near Perth, was crowned at Scone two months after his landing, while David Bruce fled helplessly to France. Edward had given no open aid to this enterprise, but the crisis tempted his ambition, and he demanded and obtained from Balliol an acknowl-

edgment of the English suzerainty. The acknowledgment, however, was fatal to Balliol himself. Surprised at Annan by a party of Scottish nobles, their sudden attack drove him in December over the border after a reign of but five months; and Berwick, which he had agreed to surrender to Edward, was strongly garrisoned against an English attack. The sudden breakdown of his vassal-king left Edward face to face with a new Scotch war. The parliament which he summoned to advise on the enforcement of his claim showed no wished to plunge again into the contest, and met him only with evasions and delays. But Edward had gone too far to withdraw. In March, 1333, he appeared before Berwick, and besieged the town. A Scotch army under the regent, Sir Archibald Douglas, brother to the famous Sir James, advanced to its relief in July, and attacked a covering force which was encamped on the strong position of Halidon Hill. The English bowmen however vindicated the fame they had first won at Falkirk and were soon to crown in the victory of Crécy. The Scotch only struggled through the marsh which covered the English front to be riddled with a storm of arrows and to break in utter rout. The battle decided the fate of Berwick. From that time the town has remained English territory. It was in fact the one part of Edward's conquests which was preserved in the end by the English crown. But, fragment as it was, it was always viewed legally as representing the realm of which it once formed a part. As Scotland, it had its chancellor, chamberlain, and other

officers of state: and the peculiar heading of acts of parliament enacted for England “and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed” still preserves the memory of its peculiar position. But the victory did more than give Berwick to England. The defeat of Douglas was followed by the submission of a large part of the Scotch nobles, by the flight of the boy-king David, and by the return of Balliol unopposed to the throne. Edward exacted a heavy price for his aid. All Scotland south of the Firth of Forth was ceded to England, and Balliol did homage as vassal-king for the rest.

315. It was at the moment of this submission that the young king reached the climax of his success. A king at fourteen, a father at seventeen, he had carried out at eighteen a political revolution in the overthrow of Mortimer, and restored at twenty-two the ruined work of his grandfather. The northern frontier was carried to its old line under the Northumbrian kings. His kingdom within was peaceful and orderly; and the strife with France seemed at an end. During the next three years Edward persisted in the line of policy he had adopted, retaining his hold over southern Scotland, aiding his sub-king Balliol in campaign after campaign against the despairing efforts of the nobles who still adhered to the house of Bruce, a party who were now headed by Robert the Steward of Scotland and by Earl Randolph of Moray. His perseverance was all but crowned with success, when Scotland was again saved by the intervention of France. The successes of Edward roused anew the jealousy of the French court.

David Bruce found a refuge with Philip; French ships appeared off the Scotch coast and brought aid to the patriot nobles; and the old legal questions about the Agenois and Aquitaine were mooted afresh by the French council. For a time Edward staved off the contest by repeated embassies; but his refusal to accept Philip as a mediator between England and the Scots stirred France to threats of war. In 1335 fleets gathered on its coast, descents were made on the English shores, and troops and galleys were hired in Italy and the north for an invasion of England. The mere threat of war saved Scotland. Edward's forces there were drawn to the south to meet the looked-for attack from across the Channel; and the patriot party, freed from their pressure, at once drew together again. The actual declaration of war against France at the close of 1337 was the knell of Balliol's greatness; he found himself without an adherent, and withdrew two years later to the court of Edward, while David returned to his kingdom in 1342 and won back the chief fastnesses of the lowlands. From that moment the freedom of Scotland was secured. From a war of conquest and patriotic resistance the struggle died into a petty strife between two angry neighbors, which became a mere episode in the larger contest which it had stirred between England and France.

316. Whether in its national or in its European bearings, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the contest which was now to open between these two nations. To England it brought a social, a religious, and in the end a political, revolution.

The peasant revolt, Lollardry, and the new monarchy were direct issues of the Hundred Years' war. With it began the military renown of England; with it opened her struggle for the mastery of the seas. The pride begotten of great victories and a sudden revelation of warlike prowess roused the country not only to a new ambition, a new resolve to assert itself as a European power, but to a repudiation of the claims of the papacy and an assertion of the ecclesiastical independence both of church and crown which paved the way for and gave its ultimate form to the English reformation. The peculiar shape which English warfare assumed, the triumph of the yeoman and archer over noble and knight, gave new force to the political advance of the commons. On the other hand the misery of the war produced the first great open feud between labor and capital. The glory of Crécy or Poitiers was dearly bought by the upgrowth of English pauperism. The warlike temper nursed on foreign fields begot at home a new turbulence and scorn of law, woke a new feudal spirit in the baronage, and sowed in the revolution which placed a new house on the throne the seeds of that fatal strife over the succession which troubled England to the days of Elizabeth. Nor was the contest of less import in the history of France. If it struck her for the moment from her height of pride, it raised her in the end to the front rank among the states of Europe. It carried her boundaries to the Rhone and the Pyrenees. It wrecked alike the feudal power of her noblesse and the hopes of constitutional liberty

which might have sprung from the emancipation of the peasant or the action of the burgher. It founded a royal despotism which reached its height in Richelieu and finally plunged France into the gulf of the revolution.

317. Of these mighty issues little could be foreseen at the moment when Philip and Edward declared war. But from the very first the war took European dimensions. The young king saw clearly the greater strength of France. The weakness of the empire, the captivity of the papacy at Avignon, left her without a rival among European powers. The French chivalry was the envy of the world, and its military fame had just been heightened by a victory over the Flemish communes at Cassel. In numbers, in wealth, the French people far surpassed their neighbors over the Channel. England can hardly have counted more than four millions of inhabitants, France boasted of twenty. The clinging of our kings to their foreign dominions is explained by the fact that their subjects in Gascony, Aquitaine, and Poitou must have equaled in number their subjects in England. There was the same disproportion in the wealth of the two countries, and, as men held them, in their military resources. Edward could bring only eight thousand men-at-arms to the field. Philip, while a third of his force was busy elsewhere, could appear at the head of forty thousand. Of the revolution in warfare which was to reverse this superiority, to make the footman rather than the horseman the strength of an army, the world and even the English king, in spite of Falkirk and Halidon, as yet

recked little. Edward's whole energy was bent on meeting the strength of France by a coalition of powers against her, and his plans were helped by the dread which the great feudatories of the empire who lay nearest to him, the Duke of Brabant, the Counts of Hainault and Gelders, the markgrave of Juliers, felt of French annexation. They listened willingly enough to his offers. Sixty thousand crowns purchased the alliance of Brabant. Lesser subsidies bought that of the two counts and the markgrave. The king's work was helped indeed by his domestic relations. The Count of Hainault was Edward's father-in-law; he was also the father-in-law of the Count of Gelders. But the marriage of a third of the count's daughters brought the English king a more important ally. She was wedded to the emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, and the connection that thus existed between the English and imperial courts facilitated the negotiations which ended in a formal alliance.

318. But the league had a more solid ground. The emperor, like Edward, had his strife with France. His strife sprang from the new position of the papacy. The removal of the popes to Avignon, which followed on the quarrel of Boniface the Eighth with Philip le Bel, and the subjection to the French court which resulted from it, affected the whole state of European politics. In the ever-recurring contest between the papacy and the empire, France had of old been the lieutenant of the Roman See. But with the settlement of Avignon the relation changed, and the pope became the lieutenant of France. Instead of

the papacy using the French kings in its war of ideas against the empire the French kings used the papacy as an instrument in their political rivalry with the emperors. But if the position of the pope drew Lewis to the side of England, it had much to do with drawing Edward to the side of Lewis. It was this that made the alliance, fruitless as it proved in a military sense, so memorable in its religious results. Hitherto England had been mainly on the side of the popes in their strife against the emperors. Now that the pope had become a tool in the hands of a power which was to be its great enemy, the country was driven to close alliances with the empire and to an ever-growing alienation from the Roman See. In Scotch affairs the hostility of the popes had been steady and vexatious ever since Edward the First's time, and from the moment that this fresh struggle commenced they again showed their French partisanship. When Lewis made a last appeal for peace, Philip of Valois made Benedict XII. lay down as a condition that the emperor should form no alliance with an enemy of France. The quarrel of both England and Germany with the papacy at once grew ripe. The German Diet met to declare that the imperial power came from God alone, and that the choice of an emperor needed no papal confirmation, while Benedict replied by a formal excommunication of Lewis. England on the other hand entered on a religious revolution when she stood hand in hand with an excommunicated power. It was significant that though worship ceased in Flanders on the pope's interdict, the

English priests who were brought over set the interdict at naught.

319. The negotiation of this alliance occupied the whole of 1337; it ended in a promise of the emperor on payment of 3,000 gold florins to furnish two thousand men-at-arms. In the opening of 1338 an attack of Philip on the Agenois forced Edward into open war. His profuse expenditure, however, brought little fruit. Though Edward crossed to Antwerp in the summer, the year was spent in negotiations with the princes of the lower Rhine, and in an interview with the emperor at Coblenz, where Lewis appointed him vicar-general of the emperor for all territories on the left bank of the Rhine. The occupation of Cambray, an imperial fief, by the French king gave a formal ground for calling the princes of this district to Edward's standard. But already the great alliance showed signs of yielding. Edward, uneasy at his connection with an emperor under the ban of the church, and harassed by vehement remonstrances from the pope, entered again into negotiations with France in the winter of 1338; and Lewis, alarmed in his turn, listened to fresh overtures from Benedict, who held out vague hopes of reconciliation, while he threatened a renewed excommunication if Lewis persisted in invading France. The non arrival of the English subsidy decided the emperor to take no personal part in the war, and the attitude of Lewis told on the temper of Edward's German allies. Though all joined him in the summer of 1339 on his formal summons of them as vicar-general of the empire, and his army when it appeared before Cambray num-

bered forty thousand men, their ardor cooled as the town held out. Philip approached it from the south, and on Edward's announcing his resolve to cross the river and attack him he was at once deserted by the two border princes who had most to lose from a contest with France, the Counts of Hainault and Namur. But the king was still full of hope. He pushed forward to the country round St. Quentin between the head-waters of the Somme and the Oise with the purpose of forcing a decisive engagement. But he found Philip strongly encamped, and, declaring their supplies exhausted, his allies at once called for a retreat. It was in vain that Edward moved slowly for a week along the French border. Philip's position was too strongly guarded by marshes and intrenchments to be attacked, and at last the allies would stay no longer. At the news that the French king had withdrawn to the south the whole army in turn fell back upon Brussels.

320. The failure of the campaign dispelled the hopes which Edward had drawn from his alliance with the empire. With the exhaustion of his subsidies the princes of the Low Countries became inactive. The Duke of Brabant became cooler in his friendship. The emperor himself, still looking to an accommodation with the pope and justly jealous of Edward's own intrigues at Avignon, wavered and at last fell away. But though the alliance ended in disappointment it had given a new impulse to the grudge against the papacy, which began with its extortions in the reign of Henry the Third. The hold of Rome on the loyalty of England was sensibly

weakening. Their transfer from the eternal city to Avignon robbed the popes of half the awe which they had inspired among Englishmen. Not only did it bring them nearer and more into the light of common day, but it dwarfed them into mere agents of French policy. The old bitterness at their exactions was revived by the greed to which they were driven through their costly efforts to impose a French and papal emperor on Germany, as well as to secure themselves in their new capital on the Rhone. The mighty building, half fortress, half palace, which still awes the traveler at Avignon, has played its part in our history. Its erection was to the rise of Lollardry what the erection of St. Peter's was to the rise of Lutheranism. Its massive walls, its stately chapel, its chambers glowing with the frescoes of Simone Memmi, the garden which covered its roof with a strange verdure, called year by year for fresh supplies of gold; and for this, as for the wider and costlier schemes of papal policy, gold could be got only by pressing harder and harder on the national churches the worst claims of the papal court, by demands of first-fruits and annates from rectory and bishopric, by pretensions to the right of bestowing all benefices which were in ecclesiastical patronage, and by the sale of these presentations, by the direct taxation of the clergy; by the intrusion of foreign priests into English livings, by opening a mart for the disposal of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, and by encouraging appeals from every ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the papal court. No grievance was more bitterly felt than this grievance of appeals. Cases of

the most trifling importance were called for decision out of the realm to a tribunal whose delays were proverbial and whose fees were enormous. The envoy of an Oxford college, which sought only a formal license to turn a vicarage into a rectory, had not only to bear the expense and toil of a journey which then occupied some eighteen days, but was kept dangling at Avignon for three-and-twenty weeks. Humiliating and vexatious, however, as these appeals were, they were but one among the means of extortion which the papal court multiplied as its needs grew greater. The protest of a later parliament, exaggerated as its statements no doubt are, shows the extent of the national irritation, if not of the grievances which produced it. It asserted that the taxes levied by the pope amounted to five times the amount of those levied by the king; that by reservations during the life of actual holders the pope disposed of the same bishopric four or five times over, receiving each time the first-fruits. "The brokers of the sinful city of Rome promote for money unlearned and unworthy caitiffs to benefices to the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtain one of twenty. So decays sound learning. They present aliens who neither see nor care to see their parishioners, despise God's services, convey away the treasure of the realm, and are worse than Jews or Saracens. The pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom. God gave his sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn." At the close of this reign, indeed, the deaneries of Lichfield, Salisbury, and York, the arch-

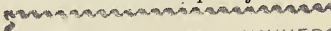
deaconry of Canterbury, which was reputed the wealthiest English benefice, together with a host of prebends and preferments, were held by Italian cardinals and priests, while the pope's collector from his office in London sent twenty thousand marks a year to the papal treasury.

321. But the greed of the popes was no new grievance, though the increase of these exactions since the removal to Avignon gave it a new force. What alienated England most was their connection with and dependence on France. From the first outset of the troubles in the north their attitude had been one of hostility to the English projects. France was too useful a supporter of the papal court to find much difficulty in inducing it to aid in hampering the growth of English greatness. Boniface the Eighth released Balliol from his oath of fealty, and forbade Edward to attack Scotland, on the ground that it was a fief of the Roman See. His intervention was met by a solemn and emphatic protest from the English Parliament; but it none the less formed a terrible obstacle in Edward's way. The obstacle was at last removed by the quarrel of Boniface with Philip the Fair; but the end of this quarrel only threw the papacy more completely into the hands of France. Though Avignon remained imperial soil, the removal of the popes to this city on the verge of their dominions made them mere tools of the French kings. Much, no doubt, of the endless negotiation which the papal court carried on with Edward the Third in his strife with Philip of Valois was an honest struggle for peace. But to England it seemed the

mere interference of a dependent on behalf of "our enemy of France." The people scorned a "French pope," and threatened papal legates with stoning when they landed on English shores. The alliance of Edward with an excommunicated emperor, the bold defiance with which English priests said mass in Flanders when an interdict reduced the Flemish priests to silence, were significant tokens of the new attitude which England was taking up in the face of popes who were leagued with its enemy. The old quarrel over ecclesiastical wrongs was renewed in a formal and decisive way. In 1343 the commons petitioned for the redress of the grievance of papal appointments to vacant livings in despite of the rights of patrons or the crown; and Edward formally complained to the pope of his appointing "foreigners, most of them suspicious persons, who do not reside on their benefices, who do not know the faces of the flocks intrusted to them, who do not understand their language, but, neglecting the cure of souls, seek as hirelings only their worldly hire." In yet sharper words the king rebuked the papal greed. "The successor of the apostles was set over the Lord's sheep to feed and not to shear them." The parliament declared "that they neither could nor would tolerate such things any longer;" and the general irritation moved slowly toward those statutes of provisors and *præmunire* which heralded the policy of Henry the Eighth.

322. But for the moment the strife with the papacy was set aside in the efforts which were needed for a new struggle with France. The campaign of 1339

had not only ended in failure, it had dispelled the trust of Edward in an imperial alliance. But as this hope faded away a fresh hope dawned on the king from another quarter. Flanders, still bleeding from the defeat of its burghers by the French knighthood, was his natural ally. England was the great wool-producing country of the west, but few woollen fabrics were woven in England. The number of weavers' guilds shows that the trade was gradually extending, and at the very outset of his reign Edward had taken steps for its encouragement. He invited Flemish weavers to settle in his country, and took the new immigrants, who chose the eastern counties for the seat of their trade, under his royal protection. But English manufactures were still in their infancy, and nine-tenths of the English wool went to the looms of Bruges or of Ghent. We may see the rapid growth of this export trade in the fact that the king received in a single year more than £30,000 from duties levied on wool alone. The wool-sack which forms the chancellor's seat in the House of Lords is said to witness to the importance which the government attached to this new source of wealth. A stoppage of this export threw half of the population of the great Flemish towns out of work, and the irritation caused in Flanders by the interruption which this trade sustained through the piracies that Philip's ships were carrying on in the Channel showed how effective the threat of such a stoppage would be in securing their alliance. Nor was this the only ground for hoping for aid from the Flemish towns. Their democratic spirit jostled



roughly with the feudalism of France. If their counts clung to the French monarchy, the towns themselves, proud of their immense population, their thriving industry, their vast wealth, drew more and more to independence. Jacques van Arteveldt, a great brewer of Ghent, wielded the chief influence in their councils, and his aim was to build up a confederacy which might hold France in check along her northern border.

323. His plans had as yet brought no help from the Flemish towns, but at the close of 1339 they set aside their neutrality for open aid. The great plan of federation which Van Arteveldt had been devising as a check on the aggression of France was carried out in a treaty concluded between Edward, the Duke of Brabant, the cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Louvain, Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and seven others. By this remarkable treaty it was provided that war should be begun and ended only by mutual consent, free commerce be encouraged between Flanders and Brabant, and no change made in their commercial arrangements save with the consent of the whole league. By a subsequent treaty the Flemish towns owned Edward as King of France, and declared war against Philip of Valois. But their voice was decisive on the course of the campaign which opened in 1340. As Philip held the upper Scheldt by the occupation of Cambray, so he held the lower Scheldt by that of Tournay, a fortress which broke the line of commerce between Flanders and Brabant. It was a condition of the Flemish alliance, therefore, that the war should open with the capture of Tour-

may. It was only at the cost of a fight, however, that Edward could now cross the channel to undertake the siege. France was as superior in force at sea as on land; and a fleet of 200 vessels gathered at Sluys to intercept him. But the fine seamanship of the English sailors justified the courage of their king in attacking this fleet with far smaller forces; the French ships were utterly destroyed, and 20,000 Frenchmen slain in the encounter. It was with the lustre of this great victory about him that Edward marched upon Tournay. Its siege, however, proved as fruitless as that of Cambray in the preceding year, and, after two months of investment, his vast army of 100,000 men broke up without either capturing the town or bringing Philip when he approached it to an engagement. Want of money forced Edward to a truce for a year, and he returned beggared and embittered to England.

324. He had been worsted in war as in diplomacy. One naval victory alone redeemed years of failure and expense. Guienne was all but lost, England was suffering from the terrible taxation, from the ruin of commerce, from the ravages of her coast. Five years of constant reverses were hard blows for a king of twenty-eight who had been glorious and successful at twenty-three. His financial difficulties, indeed, were enormous. It was in vain that, availing himself of an act which forbade the exportation of wool "till by the king and his council it is otherwise provided," he turned for the time the wool-trade into a royal monopoly and became the sole wool exporter, buying at £3 and selling at £20 the

sack. The campaign of 1339 brought with it a crushing debt; that of 1340 proved yet more costly. Edward attributed his failure to the slackness of his ministers in sending money and supplies, and this to their silent opposition to the war. But wroth as he was on his return, a short struggle between the ministers and the king ended in a reconciliation, and preparations for renewed hostilities went on. Abroad, indeed, nothing could be done. The emperor finally withdrew from Edward's friendship. A new pope, Clement the Sixth, proved even more French in sentiment than his predecessor. Flanders alone held true of all England's foreign allies. Edward was powerless to attack Philip in the realm he claimed for his own; what strength he could gather was needed to prevent the utter ruin of the English cause in Scotland on the return of David Bruce. Edward's soldiers had been driven from the open country and confined to the fortresses of the Lowlands. Even these were at last reft away. Perth was taken by siege, and the king was too late to prevent the surrender of Stirling. Edinburgh was captured by a stratagem. Only Roxburgh and Berwick were saved by a truce which Edward was driven to conclude with the Scots.

325. But with the difficulties of the crown the weight of the two houses made itself more and more sensibly felt. The almost incessant warfare which had gone on since the accession of Edward the Third consolidated and developed the power which they had gained from the dissensions of his father's reign. The need of continual grants brought about

an assembly of parliament year by year, and the subsidies that were accorded to the king showed the potency of the financial engine which the crown could now bring into play. In a single year the parliament granted 20,000 sacks, or half the wool of the realm. Two years later the commons voted an aid of 30,000 sacks. In 1339 the barons granted the tenth sheep and fleece and lamb. The clergy granted two-tenths in one year, and a tenth for three years in the next. But with each supply some step was made to greater political influence. In his earlier years Edward showed no jealousy of the parliament. His policy was to make the struggle with France a national one by winning for it the sympathy of the people at large; and with this view he not only published in the county courts the efforts he had made for peace, but appealed again and again for the sanction and advice of parliament in his enterprise. In 1331 he asked the estates whether they would prefer negotiation or war; in 1338 he declared that his expedition to Flanders was made by the assent of the lords and at the prayer of the commons. The part of the last in public affairs grew greater in spite of their own efforts to remain obscure. From the opening of the reign a crowd of enactments for the regulation of trade, whether wise or unwise, shows the influence of the burgesses. But the final division of parliament into two houses, a change which was completed by 1341, necessarily increased the weight of the commons. The humble trader who shrank from counseling the crown in great matters of policy, gathered courage as he found himself sitting side by

side with the knights of the shire. It was at the moment when this great change was being brought about that the disasters of the war spurred the parliament to greater activity. The enormous grants of 1340 were brought by the king's assent to statutes which provided remedies for grievances of which the commons complained. The most important of these put an end to the attempts which Edward had made, like his grandfather, to deal with the merchant class apart from the houses. No charges or aid were henceforth to be made save by the common assent of the estates assembled in parliament. The progress of the next year was yet more important. The strife of the king with his ministers, the foremost of whom was Archbishop Stratford, ended in the primate's refusal to make answer to the royal charges save in full parliament, and in the assent of the king to a resolution of the lords that none of their number, whether ministers of the crown or no, should be brought to trial elsewhere than before his peers. The commons demanded and obtained the appointment of commissioners elected in parliament to audit the grants already made. Finally it was enacted that at each parliament the ministers should hold themselves accountable for all grievances; that on any vacancy the king should take counsel with his lords as to the choice of the new minister; and that, when chosen, each minister should be sworn in parliament.

At the moment which we have reached, therefore, the position of the parliament had become far more important than at Edward's accession. Its form was

settled. The third estate had gained a fuller parliamentary power. The principle of ministerial responsibility to the houses had been established by formal statute. But the jealousy of Edward was at last completely roused, and from this moment he looked on the new power as a rival to his own. The parliament of 1341 had no sooner broken up than he revoked by letters-patent the statutes it had passed as done in prejudice of his prerogative, and only assented to for the time to prevent worse confusion. The regular assembly of the estates was suddenly interrupted, and two years passed without a parliament. It was only the continual presence of war which from this time drove Edward to summon the houses at all. Though the truce still held good between England and France, a quarrel of succession to the Duchy of Brittany which broke out in 1341 and called Philip to the support of one claimant, his cousin Charles of Blois, and Edward to the support of a rival claimant, John of Montfort, dragged on year after year. In Flanders things went ill for the English cause. The dissensions between the great and the smaller towns, and in the greater towns themselves between the weavers and fullers, dissensions which had taxed the genius of Van Arteveldt through the nine years of his wonderful rule, broke out in 1345 into a revolt at Ghent in which the great statesman was slain. With him fell a design for the deposition of the Count of Flanders and the reception of the Prince of Wales in his stead, which he was ardently pressing, and whose political results might have been immense. Deputies were at once

sent to England to excuse Van Arteveldt's murder and to promise loyalty to Edward; but the king's difficulties had now reached their height. His loans from the Florentine bankers amounted to half a million. His claim on the French crown found not a single adherent save among the burghers of the Flemish towns. The overtures which he made for peace were contemptuously rejected, and the expiration of the truce in 1345 found him again face to face with France.

327. But it was perhaps this breakdown of all foreign hope that contributed to Edward's success in the fresh outbreak of war. The war opened in Guienne, and Henry of Lancaster, who was now known as the Earl of Derby, and who with the Hainaulter Sir Walter Maunay took the command in that quarter, at once showed the abilities of a great general. The course of the Garonne was cleared by his capture of La Reole and Aiguillon, that of the Dordogne by the reduction of Bergerac, and a way opened for the reconquest of Poitou by the capture of Angoulême. These unexpected successes roused Philip to strenuous efforts, and a hundred thousand men gathered under his son, John, Duke of Normandy, for the subjugation of the south. Angoulême was won back and Aiguillon besieged, when Edward sailed to the aid of his hard-pressed lieutenant. It was with an army of 30,000 men, half English, half Irish and Welsh, that he commenced a march which was to change the whole face of the war. His aim was simple. Flanders was still true to Edward's cause, and while Derby was pressing on

in the south, a Flemish army besieged Bouvines and threatened France from the north. The king had at first proposed to land in Guienne and relieve the forces in the south; but suddenly changing his design, he disembarked at La Hogue and advanced through Normandy. By this skillful movement Edward not only relieved Derby but threatened Paris, and left himself able to co-operate with either his own army in the south or the Flemings in the north. Normandy was totally without defense, and after the sack of Caen, which was then one of the wealthiest towns in France, Edward marched upon the Seine. His march threatened Rouen and Paris, and its strategical value was seen by the sudden panic of the French king. Philip was wholly taken by surprise. He attempted to arrest Edward's march by an offer to restore the Duchy of Aquitaine as Edward the Second had held it, but the offer was fruitless. Philip was forced to call his son to the rescue. John at once raised the siege of Aiguillon, and the French army moved rapidly to the north, its withdrawal enabling Derby to capture Poitiers and make himself thorough master of the south. But John was too distant from Paris for his forces to avail Philip in his emergency, for Edward, finding the bridges on the lower Seine broken, pushed straight on Paris, rebuilt the bridge of Poissy, and threatened the capital.

328. At this crisis, however, France found an unexpected help in a body of German knights. The long strife between Lewis of Bavaria and the papacy had ended at last in Clement's carrying out his sentence of deposition by the nomination and coronation

as emperor of Charles of Luxemburg, a son of King John of Bohemia, the well-known Charles IV. of the Golden Bull. But against this papal assumption of a right to bestow the German crown Germany rose as one man. Not a town opened its gates to the papal claimant, and driven to seek help and refuge from Philip of Valois he found himself at this moment on the eastern frontier of France with his father and 500 knights. Hurrying to Paris, this German force formed the nucleus of an army which assembled at St. Denys, and which was soon reinforced by 15,000 Genoese cross-bowmen who had been hired from among the soldiers of the Lord of Monaco on the sunny Riviera and arrived at this hour of need. With this host rapidly gathering in his front Edward abandoned his march on Paris, which had already served its purpose in relieving Derby, and threw himself across the Seine to carry out the second part of his programme by a junction with the Flemings at Gravelines and a campaign in the north. But the rivers in his path were carefully guarded, and it was only by surprising the ford of Blanche-Taque on the Somme that the king escaped the necessity of surrendering to the vast host which was now hastening in pursuit. His communications, however, were no sooner secured than he halted, on the twenty-sixth of August, at the little village of Crécy in Ponthieu, and resolved to give battle. Half of his army, which had been greatly reduced in strength by his rapid marches, consisted of light-armed footmen from Ireland and Wales; the bulk of the remainder was composed of English bowmen.

The king ordered his men-at-arms to dismount, and drew up his forces on a low rise sloping gently to the south-east, with a deep ditch covering its front, and its flanks protected by woods and a little brook. From a windmill on the summit of this rise Edward could overlook the whole field of battle. Immediately beneath him lay his reserve, while at the base of the slope was placed the main body of the army in two divisions, that to the right commanded by the young Prince of Wales, Edward "the Black Prince," as he was called, that to the left by the Earl of Northampton. A small ditch protected the English front, and behind it the bowmen were drawn up "in the form of a harrow" with small bombards between them "which with fire threw little iron balls to frighten the horses," the first instance known of the use of artillery in field-warfare.

329. The halt of the English army took Philip by surprise, and he attempted for a time to check the advance of his army. But the attempt was fruitless, and the disorderly host rolled on to the English front. The sight of his enemies indeed stirred Philip's own blood to fury, "for he hated them." The fight began at vespers. The Genoese cross-bowmen were ordered to open the attack, but the men were weary with their march, a sudden storm wetted and rendered useless their bowstrings, and the loud shouts with which they leapt forward to the encounter were met with dogged silence in the English ranks. Their first arrow flight, however, brought a terrible reply. So rapid was the English shot, "that it seemed as if it snowed." "Kill me these

scoundrels," shouted Philip, as the Genoese fell back; and his men-at-arms plunged butchering into their broken ranks, while the Counts of Alençon and Flanders at the head of the French knighthood fell hotly on the prince's line. For an instant his small force seemed lost, and he called his father to support him. But Edward refused to send him aid. "Is he dead, or unhorsed, or so wounded that he cannot help himself?" he asked the envoy. "No, sir," was the reply, "but he is in a hard passage of arms, and sorely needs your help." "Return to those that sent you," said the king, "and bid them not send to me again so long as my son lives! Let the boy win his spurs, for, if God so order it, I will that the day may be his, and that the honor may be with him and them to whom I have given it in charge." Edward could see in fact from his higher ground that all went well. The English bowmen and men-at-arms held their ground stoutly, while the Welshmen stabbed the French horses in the mêlée and brought knight after knight to the ground. Soon the French host was wavering in a fatal confusion. "You are my vassals, my friends," cried the blind John of Bohemia to the German nobles around him; "I pray and beseech you to lead me so far into the fight that I may strike one good blow with this sword of mine!" Linking their bridles together, the little company plunged into the thick of the combat to fall as their fellows were falling. The battle went steadily against the French. At last Philip himself hurried from the field, and the defeat became a rout. Twelve hundred knights and

30,000 footmen—a number equal to the whole English force—lay dead upon the ground.

330. “God has punished us for our sins,” cries the chronicler of St. Denys, in a passion of bewildered grief, as he tells the rout of the great host which he had seen mustering beneath his abbey walls. But the fall of France was hardly so sudden or so incomprehensible as the ruin at a single blow of a system of warfare, and with it of the political and social fabric which had risen out of that system. Feudalism rested on the superiority of the horseman to the footman, of the mounted noble to the unmounted churl. The real fighting power of a feudal army lay in its knighthood, in the baronage and landowners who took the field, each with his group of esquires and mounted men-at-arms. A host of footmen followed them, but they were ill-armed, ill-disciplined, and seldom called on to play any decisive part on the actual battle-field. In France, and especially at the moment we have reached, the contrast between the efficiency of these two elements of warfare was more striking than elsewhere. Nowhere was the chivalry so splendid, nowhere was the general misery and oppression of the poor more terribly expressed in the worthlessness of the mob of footmen who were driven by their lords to the camp. In England, on the other hand, the failure of feudalism to win a complete hold on the country was seen in the persistence of the older national institutions which based its defense on the general levy of its freemen. If the foreign kings added to this a system of warlike organization grounded on the ser-

vice due from its military tenants to the crown, they were far from regarding this as superseding the national "fyrd." The assize of arms, the statute of Winchester, show with what care the fyrd was held in a state of efficiency. Its force indeed as an engine of war was fast rising between the age of Henry the Second and that of Edward the Third. The social changes on which we have already dwelt, the facilities given to alienation and the subdivision of lands, the transition of the serf into a copyholder and of the copyholder by redemption of his services into a freeholder, the rise of a new class of "farmers" as the lords ceased to till their demesne by means of bailiffs and adopted the practice of leasing it at a rent or "farm" to one of the customary tenants, the general increase of wealth which was telling on the social position even of those who still remained in villanage, undid more and more the earlier process which had degraded the free ceorl of the English conquest into the villain of the Norman conquest, and covered the land with a population of yeomen, some freeholders, some with services that every day became less weighty and already left them virtually free.

331. Such men, proud of their right to justice and an equal law, called by attendance in the county court to a share in the judicial, the financial, and the political life of the realm, were of a temper to make soldiers of a different sort from the wretched serfs who followed the feudal lords of the continent; and they were equipped with a weapon which as they wielded it was enough of itself to make a revolution

in the art of war. The bow, identified as it became with English warfare, was the weapon not of Englishmen but of their Norman conquerors. It was the Norman arrow-flight that decided the day of Senlac. But in the organization of the national army it had been assigned as the weapon of the poorer freeholders who were liable to serve at the king's summons; and we see how closely it had become associated with them in the picture of Chaucer's yeoman. "In his hand he bore a mighty bow." Its might lay not only in the range of the heavy war-shaft, a range, we are told, of 400 yards, but in its force. The English archer, taught from very childhood "how to draw, how to lay his body to the bow," his skill quickened by incessant practice and constant rivalry with his fellows, raised the bow into a terrible engine of war. Thrown out along the front in a loose order that alone showed their vigor and self-dependence, the bowmen faced and riddled the splendid line of knighthood as it charged upon them. The galled horses "reeled right rudely." Their riders found even the steel of Milan a poor defense against the gray-goose shaft. Gradually the bow dictated the very tactics of an English battle. If the mass of cavalry still plunged forward, the screen of archers broke to the right and left, and the men-at-arms who lay in reserve behind them made short work of the broken and disordered horsemen, while the light troops from Wales and Ireland, flinging themselves into the *mêlée* with their long knives and darts, brought steed after steed to the ground. It was this new military engine that Ed

ward the Third carried to the fields of France. His armies were practically bodies of hired soldiery, for the short period of feudal service was insufficient for foreign campaigns, and yeoman and baron were alike drawn by a high rate of pay. An archer's daily wages equaled some five shillings of our present money. Such payment when coupled with the hope of plunder was enough to draw yeomen from thorp and farm; and though the royal treasury was drained as it had never been drained before, the English king saw himself after the day of Crécy the master of a force without rival in the stress of war.

332. To England her success was the beginning of a career of military glory which, fatal as it was destined to prove to the higher sentiments and interests of the nation, gave it a warlike energy such as it had never known before. Victory followed victory. A few months after Crécy a Scotch army marched over the border and faced, on the 17th of October, an English force at Neville's Cross. But it was soon broken by the arrow-flight of the English archers, and the Scotch king, David Bruce, was taken prisoner. The withdrawal of the French from the Garonne enabled Henry of Derby to recover Poitou. Edward, meanwhile, with a decision which marks his military capacity, marched from the field of Crécy to form the siege of Calais. No measure could have been more popular with the English merchant class, for Calais was a great pirate haven, and in a single year twenty-two privateers from its port had swept the Channel. But Edward was guided by weightier considerations than this. In spite of his

victory at Sluys, the superiority of France at sea had been a constant embarrassment. From this difficulty the capture of Calais would do much to deliver him, for Dover and Calais together bridled the Channel. Nor was this all. Not only would the possession of the town give Edward a base of operations against France, but it afforded an easy means of communication with the only sure allies of England, the towns of Flanders. Flanders seemed at this moment to be wavering. Its count had fallen at Crécy, but his son, Lewis le Mâle, though his sympathies were as French as his father's, was received in November by his subjects with the invariable loyalty which they showed to their rulers; and his own efforts to detach them from England were seconded by the influence of the Duke of Brabant. But with Edward close at hand beneath the walls of Calais the Flemish towns stood true. They prayed the young count to marry Edward's daughter, imprisoned him on his refusal, and on his escape to the French court, in the spring of 1347, they threw themselves heartily into the English cause. A hundred thousand Flemings advanced to Cassel and ravaged the French frontier.

333. The danger of Calais roused Philip from the panic which had followed his defeat, and with a vast army he advanced to the north. But Edward's lines were impregnable. The French king failed in another attempt to dislodge the Flemings, and was at last driven to retreat without a blow. Hopeless of further succor, the town, after a year's siege, was starved into surrender in August, 1347. Mercy was

granted to the garrison and the people on condition that six of the citizens gave themselves into the English king's hands. "On them," said Edward with a burst of bitter hatred, "I will do my will." At the sound of the town bell, Jehan le Bel tells us, the folk of Calais gathered round the bearer of these terms, "desiring to hear their good news, for they were all mad with hunger. When the said knight told them his news, then began they to weep and cry so loudly that it was great pity. Then stood up the wealthiest burgess of the town, Master Eustache de St. Pierre by name, and spake thus before all: 'My masters, great grief and mishap it were for all to leave such a people as this is to die by famine or otherwise; and great charity and grace would he win from our Lord who could defend them from dying. For me, I have great hope in the Lord that if I can save this people by my death I shall have pardon for my faults, wherefore will I be the first of the six, and of my own will put myself barefoot in my shirt and with a halter round my neck in the mercy of King Edward.'" The list of devoted men was soon made up, and the victims were led before the king. "All the host assembled together; there was great press, and many bade hang them openly, and many wept for pity. The noble king came with his train of counts and barons to the place, and the queen followed him, though great with child, to see what there would be. The six citizens knelt down at once before the king, and Master Eustache spake thus:— 'Gentle king, here we be six who have been of the old bourgeoisie of Calais and great merchants; we

bring you the keys of the town and castle of Calais, and render them to you at your pleasure. We set ourselves in such wise as you see purely at your will, to save the remnant of the people that has suffered much pain. So may you have pity and mercy on us for your high nobleness' sake.' Certes, there was then in that place neither lord nor knight that wept not for pity, nor who could speak for pity; but the king had his heart so hardened by wrath that for a long while he could not reply; then he commanded to cut off their heads. All the knights and lords prayed him with tears, as much as they could, to have pity on them, but he would not hear. Then spoke the gentle knight, Master Walter de Maunay, and said: 'Ha, gentle sire! bridle your wrath; you have the renown and good fame of all gentleness; do not a thing whereby men can speak any villainy of you! If you have no pity, all men will say that you have a heart full of all cruelty to put these good citizens to death that of their own will are come to render themselves to you to save the remnant of the people.' At this point the king changed countenance with wrath, and said: 'Hold your peace, Master Walter! it shall be none otherwise. Call the headsman. They of Calais have made so many of my men die, that they must die themselves!' Then did the noble Queen of England a deed of noble lowliness, seeing she was great with child, and wept so tenderly for pity that she could no longer stand upright; therefore she cast herself on her knees before her lord the king, and spake on this wise: 'Ah, gentle sire, from the day that I passed over sea

in great peril, as you know, I have asked for nothing: now pray I and beseech you, with folded hands, for the love of our Lady's Son to have mercy upon them.' The gentle king waited awhile before speaking, and looked on the queen as she knelt before him bitterly weeping. Then began his heart to soften a little, and he said: 'Lady, I would rather you had been elsewhere: you pray so tenderly that I dare not refuse you; and though I do it against my will, nevertheless take them, I give them to you.' Then took he the six citizens by the halters and delivered them to the queen, and released from death all those of Calais for the love of her; and the good lady bade them clothe the six burgesses and make them good cheer."

CHAPTER III.

THE PEASANT REVOLT.

(1347-1381.)

334. Still in the vigor of manhood, for he was but thirty-five, Edward the Third stood at the height of his renown. He had won the greatest victory of his age. France, till now the first of European states, was broken and dashed from her pride of place at a single blow. The kingdom seemed to lie at Edward's mercy, for Guienne was recovered, Flanders was wholly on his side, and Brittany, where the capture of Charles of Blois secured the success of his rival and the English party which supported him, opened the road to Paris. At home his government

was popular, and Scotland, the one enemy he had to dread, was bridled by the capture of her king. How great his renown was in Europe was seen in 1347, when on the death of Lewis of Bavaria the electors offered him the imperial crown. Edward was in truth a general of a high order, and he had shown himself as consummate a strategist in the campaign as a tactician in the field. But to the world about him he was even more illustrious as the foremost representative of the showy chivalry of his day. He loved the pomp of tournaments; he revived the round table of the fabled Arthur; he celebrated his victories by the creation of a new order of knight-hood. He had varied the sterner operations of the siege of Calais by a hand-to-hand combat with one of the bravest of the French knights. A naval picture of Froissart sketches Edward for us as he sailed to meet a Spanish fleet which was sweeping the narrow seas. We see the king sitting on deck in his jacket of black velvet, his head covered by a black beaver hat "which became him well," and calling on Sir John Chandos to troll out the songs he had brought with him from Germany, till the Spanish ships heave in sight and a furious fight begins which ends in a victory that leaves Edward "King of the Seas."

335. But beneath all this glitter of chivalry lay the subtle, busy diplomatist. None of our kings was so restless a negotiator. From the first hour of Edward's rule the threads of his diplomacy ran over Europe in almost inextricable confusion. And to all who dealt with him he was equally false and tricky.

Emperor was played off against pope and pope against emperor, the friendship of the Flemish towns was adroitly used to put a pressure on their counts, the national wrath against the exactions of the Roman See was employed to bridle the French sympathies of the court of Avignon, and when the statutes which it produced had served their purpose they were set aside for a bargain in which king and pope shared the plunder of the church between them. His temper was as false in his dealings with his people as in his dealings with the European powers. Edward aired to country and parliament his English patriotism. "Above all other lands and realms," he made his chancellor say, "the king had most tenderly at heart his land of England, a land more full of delight and honor and profit to him than any other." His manners were popular; he donned on occasion the livery of a city guild; he dined with a London merchant. His perpetual parliaments, his appeals to them and to the country at large for counsel and aid, seemed to promise a ruler who was absolutely one at heart with the people he ruled. But when once Edward passed from sheer carelessness and gratification at the new source of wealth which the parliament opened to a sense of what its power really was becoming, he showed himself as jealous of freedom as any king that had gone before him. He sold his assent to its demands for heavy subsidies, and, when he had pocketed the money, coolly declared the statutes he had sanctioned null and void. The constitutional progress which was made during his reign was due to his absorption in showy schemes of for-

eign ambition, to his preference for war and diplomatic intrigue over the sober business of civil administration. The same shallowness of temper, the same showiness and falsehood, ran through his personal character. The king who was a model of chivalry in his dealings with knight and noble, showed himself a brutal savage to the burgesses of Calais. Even the courtesy to his queen which throws its halo over the story of their deliverance went hand in hand with a constant disloyalty to her. When once Philippa was dead, his profligacy threw all shame aside. He paraded a mistress as Queen of Beauty through the streets of London, and set her in pomp over tournaments as the Lady of the Sun. The nobles were quick to follow their lord's example. "In those days," writes a chronicler of the time, "arose a rumor and clamor among the people that wherever there was a tournament there came a great concourse of ladies, of the most costly and beautiful but not of the best in the kingdom, sometimes forty and fifty in number, as if they were a part of the tournament, ladies clad in diverse and wonderful male apparel, in party-colored tunics, with short caps and bands wound cord-wise round their heads, and girdles bound with gold and silver, and daggers in pouches across their body. And thus they rode on choice coursers to the place of tourney; and so spent and wasted their goods and vexed their bodies with scurrilous wantonness that the murmurs of the people sounded everywhere. But they neither feared God nor blushed at the chaste voice of the people."

336. The "chaste voice of the people" was soon

to grow into the stern moral protest of the Lollards, but for the moment all murmurs were hushed by the king's success. The truce which followed the capture of Calais seemed a mere rest in the career of victories which opened before Edward. England was drunk with her glory and with the hope of plunder. The cloths of Caen had been brought, after the sack of that town, to London. "There was no woman," says Walsingham, "who had not got garments, furs, feather-beds, and utensils from the spoils of Calais and other foreign cities." The court reveled in gorgeous tournaments and luxury of dress; and the establishment in 1346 of the Order of the Garter, which found its home in the new castle that Edward was raising at Windsor, marked the highest reach of the spurious "chivalry" of the day. But it was at this moment of triumph that the whole color of Edward's reign suddenly changed. The most terrible plague the world has ever witnessed advanced from the East, and, after devastating Europe from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Baltic, swooped at the close of 1348 upon Britain. The traditions of its destructiveness and the panic-struck words of the statutes passed after its visitation have been amply justified by modern research. Of the three or four millions who then formed the population of England, more than one-half were swept away in its repeated visitations. Its ravages were fiercest in the greater towns, where filthy and undrained streets afforded a constant haunt to leprosy and fever. In the burial-ground which the piety of Sir Walter Maunay purchased for the citizens of London, a

spot whose site was afterwards marked by the Charter House, more than fifty thousand corpses are said to have been interred. Thousands of people perished at Norwich, while in Bristol the living were hardly able to bury the dead. But the Black Death fell on the villages almost as fiercely as on the towns. More than one-half of the priests of Yorkshire are known to have perished; in the diocese of Norwich two-thirds of the parishes changed their incumbents. The whole organization of labor was thrown out of gear. The scarcity of hands produced by the terrible mortality made it difficult for villains to perform the services due for their lands, and only a temporary abandonment of half the rent by the landowners induced the farmers of their demesnes to refrain from the abandonment of their farms. For a time cultivation became impossible. "The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn," says a contemporary, "and there were none left who could drive them." Even when the first burst of panic was over, the sudden rise of wages consequent on the enormous diminution in the supply of labor, though accompanied by a corresponding rise in the price of food, rudely disturbed the course of industrial employments. Harvests rotted on the ground and fields were left untilled, not merely from scarcity of hands, but from the strife which now for the first time revealed itself between capital and labor.

337. Nowhere was the effect of the Black Death so keenly felt as in its bearing on the social revolution which had been steadily going on for a century past throughout the country. At the moment we

have reached, the lord of a manor had been reduced over a large part of England to the position of a modern landlord, receiving a rental in money from his tenants and supplying their place in the cultivation of his demesne lands by paid laborers. He was driven by the progress of enfranchisement to rely for the purposes of cultivation on the supply of hired labor, and hitherto this supply had been abundant and cheap. But with the ravages of the Black Death and the decrease of population, labor at once became scarce and dear. There was a general rise of wages, and the farmers of the country as well as the wealthier craftsmen of the town saw themselves threatened with ruin by what seemed to their age the extravagant demands of the labor class. Meanwhile the country was torn with riot and disorder. An outbreak of lawless self-indulgence which followed everywhere in the wake of the plague told especially upon the "landless men," workers wandering in search of work who found themselves for the first time masters of the labor market; and the wandering laborer or artisan turned easily into the "sturdy beggar," or the bandit of the woods. A summary redress for these evils was at once provided by the crown in a royal proclamation. "Because a great part of the people," runs this ordinance, "and principally of laborers and servants, is dead of the plague, some, seeing the need of their lords and the scarcity of servants, are unwilling to serve unless they receive excessive wages, and others are rather begging in idleness than supporting themselves by labor, we have ordained that any able-bodied man or

woman, of whatsoever condition, free or serf, under sixty years of age, not living of merchandise, nor following a trade, nor having of his own where-withal to live, either his own land with the culture of which he could occupy himself, and not serving another, shall if so required serve another for such wages as was the custom in the twentieth year of our reign or five or six years before."

338. It was the failure of this ordinance to effect its ends which brought about, at the close of 1349, the passing of the statute of laborers. "Every man or woman," runs this famous provision, "of whatsoever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of three score years, . . . and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about the tillage of which he may occupy himself, and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighborhood where he is bound to serve" two years before the plague began. A refusal to obey was punished by imprisonment. But sterner measures were soon found to be necessary. Not only was the price of labor fixed by the parliament of 1350, but the labor class was once more tied to the soil. The laborer was forbidden to quit the parish where he lived in search of better paid employment; if he disobeyed he became a "fugitive," and subject to imprisonment at the hands of justices of the peace. To enforce such a law literally must have been impossible, for corn rose to so high a price that a day's labor at the old wages would not have

purchased wheat enough for a man's support. But the landowners did not flinch from the attempt. The repeated re-enactment of the law shows the difficulty of applying it and the stubbornness of the struggle which it brought about. The fines and forfeitures which were levied for infractions of its provisions formed a large source of royal revenue, but so ineffectual were the original penalties that the runaway laborer was at last ordered to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, while the harboring of serfs in towns was rigorously put down. Nor was it merely the existing class of free laborers which was attacked by this reactionary movement. The increase of their numbers by a commutation of labor services for money payments was suddenly checked, and the ingenuity of the lawyers who were employed as stewards of each manor was exercised in striving to restore to the landowners that customary labor whose loss was now severely felt. Manumissions and exemptions which had passed without question were canceled on grounds of informality, and labor services from which they held themselves freed by redemption were again demanded from the villains. The attempt was the more galling that the cause had to be pleaded in the manor-court itself, and to be decided by the very officer whose interest it was to give judgment in favor of his lord. We can see the growth of a fierce spirit of resistance through the statutes which strove in vain to repress it. In the towns, where the system of forced labor was applied with even more rigor than in the country, strikes and combinations became frequent among

the lower craftsmen. In the country the free laborers found allies in the villeins, whose freedom from manorial service was questioned. These were often men of position and substance, and throughout the eastern counties the gatherings of "fugitive serfs" were supported by an organized resistance and by large contributions of money on the part of the wealthier tenantry.

339. With plague, famine, and social strife in the land, it was no time for reaping the fruits even of such a victory as Crecy. Luckily for England, the pestilence had fallen as heavily on her foe as on herself. A common suffering and exhaustion forced both countries to a truce, and, though desultory fighting went on along the Breton and Aquitanian borders, the peace which was thus secured lasted with brief intervals of fighting for seven years. It was not till 1355 that the failure of a last effort to turn the truce into a final peace again drove Edward into war. The campaign opened with a brilliant prospect of success. Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, held, as a prince of descent from the house of Valois, large fiefs in Normandy; and a quarrel springing suddenly up between him and John, who had now succeeded his father Philip on the throne of France, Charles offered to put his fortresses into Edward's hands. Master of Cherbourg, Avranches, Pontaudemer, Evreux and Meulan, Mantes, Mortain, Pontoise, Charles held in his hands the keys of France; and Edward grasped at the opportunity of delivering a crushing blow. Three armies were prepared to act in Normandy, Brittany, and Guienne.

But the first two, with Edward and Henry of Derby, who had been raised to the dukedom of Lancaster, at their head, were detained by contrary winds, and Charles, despairing of their arrival, made peace with John. Edward made his way to Calais to meet the tidings of this desertion and to be called back to England by news of a recapture of Berwick by the Scots. But his hopes of Norman co-operation were revived in 1356. The treachery of John, his seizure of the King of Navarre, and his execution of the Count of Harcourt, who was looked upon as the adviser of Charles in his policy of intrigue, stirred a general rising throughout Normandy. Edward at once dispatched troops under the Duke of Lancaster to its support. But the insurgents were soon forced to fall back. Conscious of the danger to which an English occupation of Normandy would expose him, John hastened with a large army to the west, drove Lancaster to Cherbourg, took Evreux, and besieged Breteuil.

340. Here, however, his progress was suddenly checked by news from the south. The Black Prince, as the hero of Crécy was called, had landed in Guienne during the preceding year and won a disgraceful success. Unable to pay his troops, he staved off their demands by a campaign of sheer pillage. While plague and war and the anarchy which sprang up under the weak government of John were bringing ruin on the northern and central provinces of France, the south remained prosperous and at peace. The young prince led his army of freebooters up the Garonne into "what was before one of the fat coun-

tries of the world, the people good and simple, who did not know what war was; indeed, no war had been waged against them till the prince came. The English and Gascons found the country full and gay, the rooms adorned with earpets and draperies, the caskets and chests full of fair jewels. But nothing was safe from these robbers. They, and especially the Gascons, who are very greedy, carried off everything." Glutted by the sack of Carcassone and Narbonne the plunderers fell back to Bordeaux, "their horses so laden with spoil that they could hardly move." Worthier work awaited the Black Prince in the following year. In the plan of campaign for 1356 it had been arranged that he should march upon the Loire, and there unite with a force under the Duke of Lancaster which was to land in Brittany and push rapidly into the heart of France. Delays, however, hindered the prince from starting from Bordeaux till July, and when his march brought him to the Loire the plan of the campaign had already broken down. The outbreak in Normandy had tempted the English council to divert the force under Lancaster from Brittany to that province; and the duke was now at Cherbourg, hard pressed by the French army under John. But if its original purpose was foiled, the march of the Black Prince on the Loire served still more effectively the English cause. His advance pointed straight upon Paris, and again, as in the Crécy campaign, John was forced to leave all for the protection of the capital. Hasty marches brought the king to the Loire, while Prince Edward still lay at Vierzon on the Cher.

Unconscious of John's designs, he wasted some days in the capture of Romorantin while the French troops were crossing the Loire, along its course from Orleans to Tours, and John, with the advance, was hurrying through Loches upon Poitiers, in pursuit, as he supposed, of the retreating Englishmen. But the movement of the French army, near as it was, was unknown in the English camp; and when the news of it forced the Black Prince to order a retreat, the enemy was already far ahead of him. Edward reached the fields north of Poitiers to find his line of retreat cut off, and a French army of 60,000 men interposed between his forces and Bordeaux.

341. If the prince had shown little ability in his management of the campaign, he showed tactical skill in the fight which was now forced on him. On the 19th of September he took a strong position in the fields of Maupertuis, where his front was covered by thick hedges and approachable only by a deep and narrow lane which ran between vineyards. The vineyards and hedges he lined with bowmen, and drew up his small body of men-at-arms at the point where the lane opened upon the higher plain on which he was himself encamped. Edward's force numbered only 8,000 men, and the danger was great enough to force him to offer in exchange for a free retreat the surrender of his prisoners and of the places he had taken, with an oath not to fight against France for seven years to come. His offers, however, were rejected, and the battle opened with a charge of 300 French knights up the narrow lane. But the lane was soon choked with men and horses,

while the front ranks of the advancing army fell back before a galling fire of arrows from the hedge-rows. In this moment of confusion a body of English horsemen, posted unseen by their opponents on a hill to the right, charged suddenly on the French flank, and the prince, watching the disorder which was caused by the repulse and surprise, fell boldly on their front. The steady shot of the English archers completed the panic produced by this sudden attack. The first French line was driven in, and on its rout the second, a force of 16,000 men, at once broke in wild terror, and fled from the field. John still held his ground with the knights of the reserve, whom he had unwisely ordered to dismount from their horses, till a charge of the Black Prince with 2,000 lances threw this last body into confusion. The French king was taken, desperately fighting; and when his army poured back at noon in utter rout to the gates of Poitiers, 8,000 of their number had fallen on the field, 3,000 in the flight, and 2,000 men-at-arms, with a crowd of nobles, were taken prisoners. The royal captive entered London in triumph, mounted on a big white charger, while the prince rode by his side on a little black hackney to the palace of the Savoy, which was chosen as John's dwelling, and a truce for two years seemed to give healing-time to France.

342. With the Scots, Edward the Third had less good fortune. Recalled from Calais by their seizure of Berwick, the king induced Balliol to resign into his hands his shadowy sovereignty, and in the spring of 1356 marched upon Edinburgh with an overpow-

ering army, harrying and burning as he marched. But the Scots refused an engagement, a fleet sent with provisions was beaten off by a storm, and the famine-stricken army was forced to fall rapidly back on the border in a disastrous retreat. The trial convinced Edward that the conquest of Scotland was impossible, and, by a rapid change of policy which marks the man, he resolved to seek the friendship of the country he had wasted so long. David Bruce was released on promise of ransom, a truce concluded for ten years, and the prohibition of trade between the two kingdoms put an end to. But the fullness of this reconciliation screened a dextrous intrigue. David was childless, and Edward availed himself of the difficulty which the young king experienced in finding means of providing the sum demanded for his ransom to bring him over to a proposal which would have united the two countries forever. The scheme, however, was carefully concealed; and it was not till 1363 that David proposed to his parliament to set aside on his death the claims of the steward of Scotland to his crown, and to choose Edward's third son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, as his successor. Though the proposal was scornfully rejected, negotiations were still carried on between the two kings for the realization of this project, and were probably only put an end to by the calamities of Edward's later years.

343. In France, misery and misgovernment seemed to be doing Edward's work more effectually than arms. The miserable country found no rest in itself. Its routed soldiery turned into free companies of

bandits, while the lords captured at Crécy or Poitiers procured the sums needed for their ransom by extortion from the peasantry. The reforms demanded by the states-general which met in this agony of France were frustrated by the treachery of the regent, John's eldest son, Charles, Duke of Normandy, till Paris, impatient of his weakness and misrule, rose in arms against the crown. The peasants, too, driven mad by oppression and famine, rose in wild insurrection, butchering their lords and firing their castles over the whole face of France. Paris and the Jacquerie, as this peasant rising was called, were at last crushed by treachery and the sword; and, exhausted as it was, France still backed the regent in rejecting a treaty of peace by which John in 1359 proposed to buy his release. By this treaty Maine, Touraine, and Poitou, in the south, Normandy, Guisnes, Ponthieu, and Calais in the west, were ceded to the English king. On its rejection, Edward, in 1360, poured ravaging over the wasted land. Famine, however, proved its best defense. "I could not believe," said Petrarch of this time, "that this was the same France which I had seen so rich and flourishing. Nothing presented itself to my eyes but a fearful solitude, an utter poverty, land uncultivated, houses in ruins. Even the neighborhood of Paris showed everywhere marks of desolation and conflagration. The streets are deserted, the roads overgrown with weeds, the whole is a vast solitude." The utter desolation forced Edward to carry with him an immense train of provisions, and thousands of baggage-wagons, with mills, ovens, forges, and

fishing-boats, formed a long train which streamed for six miles behind his army. After a fruitless attempt upon Rheims he forced the Duke of Burgundy to conclude a treaty with him by pushing forward to Tonnerre, and then descending the Seine appeared with his army before Paris. But the wasted country forbade a siege, and Edward, after summoning the town in vain, was forced to fall back for subsistence on the Loire. It was during this march that the Duke of Normandy's envoys overtook him with proposals of peace. The misery of the land had at last bent Charles to submission, and in May a treaty was concluded at Bretigny, a small place to the eastward of Chartres. By this treaty the English king waived his claims on the crown of France and on the duchy of Normandy. On the other hand, his duchy of Aquitaine, which included Gascony, Guienne, Poitou, and Saintonge, the Limousin and the Angoumois, Perigord, and the counties of Bigorre and Rouerque, was not only restored, but freed from its obligations as a French fief, and granted in full sovereignty, with Ponthieu, Edward's heritage from the second wife of Edward the First, as well as with Guisnes and his new conquest of Calais.

344. The peace of Bretigny set its seal upon Edward's glory. But within England itself the misery of the people was deepening every hour. Men believed the world to be ending, and the judgment day to be near. A few months after the peace came a fresh swoop of the black death, carrying off the Duke of Lancaster. The repressive measures of parliament and the landowners only widened the

social chasm which parted employer from employed. We can see the growth of a fierce spirit of resistance, both to the reactionary efforts which were being made to bring back labor services and to the enactments which again bound labor to the soil, in statutes which strove in vain to repress the strikes and combinations which became frequent in the towns and the more formidable gatherings of villeins and "fugitive serfs" in the country at large. A statute of later date throws light on the nature of the resistance of the last. It tells us that "villeins and holders of land in villeinage withdrew their customs and services from their lords, having attached themselves to other persons who maintained and abetted them, and who, under color of exemplifications from Doomsday of the manors and villages where they dwelt, claimed to be quit of all manner of services either of their body or of their lands, and would suffer no distress or other course of justice to be taken against them; the villeins aiding their maintainers by threatening the officers of their lords with peril to life and limb, as well by open assemblies as by confederacies to support each other." It would seem not only as if the villein was striving to resist the reactionary tendency of the lords of manors to regain his labor service, but that, in the general overturning of social institutions, the copyholder was struggling to make himself a freeholder, and the farmer to be recognized as proprietor of the demesne he held on lease.

345. A more terrible outcome of the general suffering was seen in a new revolt against the whole

system of social inequality which had till then passed unquestioned as the divine order of the world. The peace was hardly signed when the cry of the poor found a terrible utterance in the words of "a mad priest of Kent," as the courtly Froissart calls him, who, for twenty years to come, found audience for his sermons in spite of interdict and imprisonment in the stout yeomen who gathered round him in the churchyards of Kent. "Mad" as the landowners held him to be, it was in the preaching of John Ball that England first listened to a declaration of the natural equality and rights of man. "Good people," cried the preacher, "things will never be well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labor, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state." It was the tyranny of property that then as ever roused the defiance of socialism. A spirit fatal to the whole system of the middle ages breathed in the popular

rhyme which condensed the leveling doctrine of John Ball:

“When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?”

346. More impressive, because of the very restraint and moderation of its tone, is the poem in which William Longland began at the same moment to embody with a terrible fidelity all the darker and sterner aspects of the time, its social revolt, its moral and religious awakening, the misery of the poor, the selfishness and corruption of the rich. Nothing brings more vividly home to us the social chasm which in the fourteenth century severed the rich from the poor than the contrast between his “Complaint of Piers the Plowman” and the “Canterbury Tales.” The world of wealth and ease and laughter through which the courtly Chaucer moves with eyes downcast as in a pleasant dream is a far-off world of wrong and of ungodliness to the gaunt poet of the poor. Born probably in Shropshire, where he had been put to school and received minor orders as a clerk, “Long Will,” as Longland was nicknamed from his tall stature, found his way at an early age to London, and earned a miserable livelihood there by singing “placebos” and “diriges” in the stately funerals of his day. Men took the moody clerk for a madman; his bitter poverty quickened the defiant pride that made him loath, as he tells us, to bow to the gay lords and dames who rode decked in silver and minivere along the Cheap or to exchange a “God save you” with the law sergeants as he passed their new

house in the temple. His world is the world of the poor: he dwells on the poor man's life, on his hunger and toil, his rough revelry and his despair, with the narrow intensity of a man who has no outlook beyond it. The narrowness, the misery, the monotony of the life he paints reflect themselves in his verse. It is only here and there that a love of nature or a grim earnestness of wrath quickens his rhyme into poetry; there is not a gleam of the bright human sympathy of Chaucer, of his fresh delight in the gaiety, the tenderness, the daring of the world about him, of his picturesque sense of even its coarsest contrasts, of his delicate irony, of his courtly wit. The cumbrous allegory, the tedious platitudes, the rhymed texts from Scripture which form the staple of Longland's work, are only broken here and there by phrases of a shrewd common-sense, by bitter outbursts, by pictures of a broad Hogarthian humor. What chains one to the poem is its deep undertone of sadness; the world is out of joint, and the gaunt rhymers who stalks silently along the Strand has no faith in his power to put it right.

347. Londoner as he is, Will's fancy flies far from the sin and suffering of the great city to a May-morning in the Malvern Hills. "I was very forwandered, and went me to rest under a broad bank by a burn side, and as I lay and leaned and looked in the water, I slumbered in a sleeping, it sweyved (sounded) so merry." Just as Chaucer gathers the typical figures of the world he saw into his pilgrim train, so the dreamer gathers into a wide field his army of traders and chafferers, of hermits and solitaries, of minstrels,

“japers and jinglers,” bidders and beggars, plowmen that “in setting and in sowing swonken (toil) full hard,” pilgrims “with their wenches after,” weavers and laborers, burgess and bondman, lawyer and scrivener, court-haunting bishops, friars, and pardoners “parting the silver” with the parish priest. Their pilgrimage is not to Canterbury, but to Truth; their guide to Truth neither clerk nor priest, but Peterkin the Plowman, whom they find plowing in his field. He it is who bids the knight no more wrest gifts from his tenant nor misdo with the poor. “Though he be thine underling here, well may hap in heaven that he be worthier set and with more bliss than thou. . . . For in charnel at church churles be evil to know, or a knight from a knave there.” The gospel of equality is backed by the gospel of labor. The aim of the plowman is to work, and to make the world work with him. He warns the laborer as he warns the knight. Hunger is God’s instrument in bringing the idlest to toil, and hunger waits to work her will on the idler and the waster. On the eve of the great struggle between wealth and labor, Longland stands alone in his fairness to both, in his shrewd political and religious common-sense. In the face of the popular hatred which was to gather round John of Gaunt, he paints the duke in a famous apologue as the cat who, greedy as she might be, at any rate keeps the noble rats from utterly devouring the mice of the people. Though the poet is loyal to the church, he proclaims a righteous life to be better than a host of indulgencies, and God sends his pardon to Piers when priests dispute it. But he sings as a man con-

scious of his loneliness and without hope. It is only in a dream that he sees corruption, "Lady Mead," brought to trial, and the world repenting at the preaching of reason. In the waking life, reason finds no listeners. The poet himself is looked upon—he tells us bitterly—as a madman. There is a terrible despair in the close of his later poem, where the triumph of Christ is only followed by the reign of Anti-Christ; where contrition slumbers amid the revel of death and sin; and conscience, hard beset by pride and sloth, rouses himself with a last effort, and seizing his pilgrim staff, wanders over the world to find Piers Plowman.

348. The strife, indeed, which Longland would have averted, raged only the fiercer as the dark years went by. If the statutes of laborers were powerless for their immediate ends, either in reducing the actual rate of wages or in restricting the mass of floating labor to definite areas of employment, they proved effective in sowing hatred between employer and employed, between rich and poor. But this social rift was not the only rift which was opening amidst the distress and misery of the time. The close of William Longland's poem is the prophecy of a religious revolution; and the way for such a revolution was being paved by the growing bitterness of strife between England and the papacy. In spite of the sharp protests from king and parliament, the need for money at Avignon was too great to allow any relaxation in the papal claims. Almost on the eve of Creçy Edward took the decisive step of forbidding the entry into England of any papal bulls or docu-

ments interfering with the rights of presentation belonging to private patrons. But the tenacity of Rome was far from loosening its grasp on this source of revenue, for all Edward's protests. Crécy, however, gave a new boldness to the action of the state, and a statute of provisors was passed by the parliament in 1351, which again asserted the rights of the English church, and enacted that all who infringed them by the introduction of papal "provisors" should suffer imprisonment. But resistance to provisors only brought fresh vexations. The patrons who withstood a papal nominee in the name of the law were summoned to defend themselves in the papal court. From that moment the supremacy of the papal law over the law of the land became a great question in which the lesser question of provisors merged. The pretension of the court of Avignon was met in 1353 by a statute which forbade any questioning of judgments rendered in the king's courts, or any prosecution of a suit in foreign courts, under pain of outlawry, perpetual imprisonment, or banishment from the land. It was this act of *præmunire*—as it came in after renewals to be called—which furnished so terrible a weapon to the Tudors in their later strife with Rome. But the papacy paid little heed to these warnings, and its obstinacy in still receiving suits and appeals in defiance of this statute roused the pride of a conquering people. England was still fresh from her glory at Bretigny, when Edward appealed to the parliament of 1365. Complaints, he said, were constantly being made by his subjects to the pope as to matters which were cognizable in the

king's courts. The practice of provisors was thus maintained in the teeth of the laws, and "the laws, usages, ancient customs, and franchises of his kingdom were thereby much hindered, the king's crown degraded, and his person defamed." The king's appeal was hotly met. "Biting words," which it was thought wise to suppress, were used in the debate which followed, and the statutes against provisors and appeals were solemnly confirmed.

349. What gave point to this challenge was the assent of the prelates to the proceedings of the parliament; and the pride of Urban V. at once met it by a counter-defiance. He demanded, with threats, the payment of the annual sum of a thousand marks, promised by King John in acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the see of Rome. The insult roused the temper of the realm. The king laid the demand before parliament, and both houses replied that "neither King John nor any king could put himself, his kingdom, nor his people under subjection save with their accord or assent." John's submission had been made "without their assent and against his coronation oath," and they pledged themselves, should the pope attempt to enforce his claim, to resist him with all their power. Even Urban shrank from imperiling the papacy by any further demands, and the claim to a papal lordship over England was never again heard of. But the struggle had brought to the front a man who was destined to give a far wider scope and significance to this resistance to Rome than any as yet dreamed of. Nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the obscurity

of John Wycliffe's earlier life and the fullness and vividness of our knowledge of him during the twenty years which preceded its close. Born in the earlier part of the fourteenth century, he had already passed middle age when he was appointed to the mastership of Balliol College, in the University of Oxford, and recognized as first among the schoolmen of his day. Of all the scholastic doctors, those of England had been throughout the keenest and most daring in philosophical speculation. A reckless audacity and love of novelty was the common note of Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham, as against the sober and more disciplined learning of the Parisian schoolmen, Albert and Thomas Aquinas. The decay of the University of Paris during the English wars was transferring her intellectual supremacy to Oxford, and in Oxford Wycliffe stood without a rival. From his predecessor, Bradwardine, whose work as a scholastic teacher he carried on in the speculative treatises he published during this period, he inherited the tendency to a predestinarian Augustinianism which formed the groundwork of his later theological revolt. His debt to Ockham revealed itself in his earliest efforts at church reform. Undismayed by the thunder and excommunications of the church, Ockham had supported the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria in his recent struggle, and he had not shrunk in his enthusiasm for the empire from attacking the foundations of the papal supremacy, or from asserting the rights of the civil power. The spare, emaciated frame of Wycliffe, weakened by study and asceticism, hardly promised a reformer who would carry on the

stormy work of Ockham; but within this frail form lay a temper quick and restless, an immense energy, an immovable conviction, an unconquerable pride. The personal charm which ever accompanies real greatness only deepened the influence he derived from the spotless purity of his life. As yet indeed even Wycliffe himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual power. It was only the struggle that lay before him which revealed in the dry and subtle schoolman the founder of our later English prose, a master of popular invective, of irony, of persuasion, a dexterous politician, an audacious partisan, the organizer of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists, the first reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and, with his last breath, to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the papacy.

350. At the moment of the quarrel with Pope Urban, however, Wycliffe was far from having advanced to such a position as this. As the most prominent of English scholars, it was natural that he should come forward in defense of the independence and freedom of the English church; and he published a formal refutation of the claims advanced by the papacy to deal at its will with church property in the form of a report of the parliamentary debates which we have described. As yet his quarrel was not with the doctrines of Rome, but with its practices; and it was on the principles of Ockham that

he defended the parliament's refusal of the "tribute" which was claimed by Urban. But his treatise on "The Kingdom of God," "*De Dominio Divino*," which can hardly have been written later than 1368, shows the breadth of the ground he was even now prepared to take up. In this, the most famous of his works, Wycliffe bases his argument on a distinct ideal of society. All authority, to use his own expression, is "founded in grace." Dominion in the highest sense is in God alone; it is God who, as the suzerain of the universe, deals out his rule in fief to rulers in their various stations, on tenure of their obedience to himself. It was easy to object that in such a case "dominion" could never exist, since mortal sin is a breach of such a tenure, and all men sin. But, as Wycliffe urged it, the theory is a purely ideal one. In actual practice he distinguishes between dominion and power, power which the wicked may have by God's permission, and to which the Christian must submit from motives of obedience to God. In his own scholastic phrase, so strangely perverted afterwards, here on earth "God must obey the devil." But whether in the ideal or practical view of the matter, all power and dominion was of God. It was granted by him, not to one person, his vicar on earth, as the papacy alleged, but to all. The king was as truly God's vicar as the pope. The royal power was as sacred as the ecclesiastical, and as complete over temporal things, even over the temporalities of the church, as that of the church over spiritual things. So far as the question of church and state therefore was concerned, the dis-

inction between the ideal and practical view of "dominion" was of little account. Wycliffe's application of the theory to the individual conscience was of far higher and wider importance. Obedient as each Christian might be to king or priest, he himself as a possessor of "dominion" held immediately of God. The throne of God himself was the tribunal of personal appeal. What the reformers of the sixteenth century attempted to do by their theory of justification by faith Wycliffe attempted to do by his theory of dominion, a theory which, in establishing a direct relation between man and God, swept away the whole basis of a mediating priesthood, the very foundation on which the mediæval church was built.

351. As yet the full bearing of these doctrines was little seen. But the social and religious excitement which we have described was quickened by the renewal of the war, and the general suffering and discontent gathered bitterness when the success which had flushed England with a new and warlike pride passed into a long series of disasters in which men forgot the glories of Crécy and Poitiers. Triumph as it seemed, the treaty of Bretigny was really fatal to Edward's cause in the south of France. By the cession of Aquitaine to him in full sovereignty the traditional claim on which his strength rested lost its force. The people of the south had clung to their duke, even though their duke was a foreign ruler. They had stubbornly resisted incorporation with northern France. While preserving, however, their traditional fealty

to the descendants of Eleanor, they still clung to the equally traditional suzerainty of the Kings of France. But the treaty of Bretigny not only severed them from the realm of France, it subjected them to the realm of England. Edward ceased to be their hereditary duke, he became simply an English king ruling Aquitaine as an English dominion. If the southerners loved the north French little, they loved the English less, and the treaty which thus changed their whole position was followed by a quick revulsion of feeling from the Garonne to the Pyrenees. The Gascon nobles declared that John had no right to transfer their fealty to another, and to sever them from the realm of France. The city of Rochelle prayed the French king not to release it from its fealty to him. "We will obey the English with our lips," said its citizens, "but our hearts shall never be moved toward them." Edward strove to meet this passion for local independence, this hatred of being ruled from London, by sending the Black Prince to Bordeaux, and investing him in 1362 with the Duchy of Aquitaine. But the new duke held his duchy as a fief from the English king, and the grievance of the southerners was left untouched. Charles V., who succeeded his father John in 1364, silently prepared to reap this harvest of discontent. Patient, wary, unscrupulous, he was hardly crowned before he put an end to the war which had gone on without a pause in Brittany by accepting homage from the claimant whom France had hitherto opposed. Through Bertrand du Guesclin, a fine soldier, whom his sagacity had

discovered, he forced the King of Navarre to a peace which closed the fighting in Normandy. A more formidable difficulty in the way of pacification and order lay in the Free Companies, a union of marauders whom the disbanding of both armies after the peace had set free to harry the wasted land, and whom the king's military resources were insufficient to cope with. It was the stroke by which Charles cleared his realm of these scourges which forced on a new struggle with the English in the south.

352. In the judgment of the English court the friendship of Castile was of the first importance for the security of Aquitaine. Spain was the strongest naval power of the western world, and not only would the ports of Guienne be closed, but its communication with England would be at once cut off by the appearance of a joint French and Spanish fleet in the Channel. It was with satisfaction, therefore, that Edward saw the growth of a bitter hostility between Charles and the Castilian king, Pedro the Cruel, through the murder of his wife, Blanche of Bourbon, the French king's sister-in-law. Henry of Trastamara, a bastard son of Pedro's father, Alfonso the Eleventh, had long been a refugee at the French court, and, soon after the treaty of Bretigny, Charles, in his desire to revenge this murder on Pedro, gave Henry aid in an attempt on the Castilian throne. It was impossible for England to look on with indifference while a dependent of the French king became master of Castile; and in 1362 a treaty offensive and defensive was concluded between Pedro and Edward the Third. The time was not come for open war;

but the subtle policy of Charles saw in this strife across the Pyrenees an opportunity both of detaching Castile from the English cause and of ridding himself of the Free Companies. With characteristic caution, he dexterously held himself in the background while he made use of the pope, who had been threatened by the Free Companies in his palace at Avignon, and was as anxious to get rid of them as himself. Pedro's cruelty, misgovernment, and alliance with the Moslem of Cordova served as grounds for a crusade which was proclaimed by Pope Urban; and Du Guesclin, who was placed at the head of the expedition, found in the papal treasury and in the hope of booty from an unravaged land means of gathering the marauders round his standard. As soon as these crusaders crossed the Ebro, Pedro was deserted by his subjects, and in 1366 Henry of Trastamara saw himself crowned without a struggle at Burgos as King of Castile. Pedro, with his two daughters, fled for shelter to Bordeaux, and claimed the aid promised in the treaty. The lords of Aquitaine shrank from fighting for such a cause, but in spite of their protests and the reluctance of the English council to embark in so distant a struggle, Edward held that he had no choice save to replace his ally, for to leave Henry seated on the throne was to leave Aquitaine to be crushed between France and Castile.

353. The after course of the war proved that in his anticipations of the fatal result of a combination of the two powers Edward was right, but his policy jarred not only against the universal craving for rest,

but against the moral sense of the world. The Black Prince, however, proceeded to carry out his father's design in the teeth of the general opposition. His call to arms robbed Henry of the aid of those English companies who had marched till now with the rest of the crusaders, but who returned at once to the standard of the prince; the passes of Navarre were opened with gold, and in the beginning of 1367 the English army crossed the Pyrenees. Advancing to the Ebro, the prince offered battle at Navarete with an army already reduced by famine and disease in its terrible winter march, and Henry, with double his numbers, at once attacked him. But in spite of the obstinate courage of the Castilian troops, the discipline and skill of the English soldiers once more turned the wavering day into a victory. Du Guesclin was taken, Henry fled across the Pyrenees, and Pedro was again seated on his throne. The pay, however, which he had promised was delayed; and the prince, whose army had been thinned by disease to a fifth of its numbers, and whose strength never recovered from the hardships of this campaign, fell back sick and beggared to Aquitaine. He had hardly returned when his work was undone. In 1368 Henry re-entered Castile; its towns threw open their gates; a general rising chased Pedro from the throne, and a final battle in the spring of 1369 saw his utter overthrow. His murder by Henry's hand left the bastard undisputed master of Castile. Meanwhile, the Black Prince, sick and disheartened, was hampered at Bordeaux by the expenses of the campaign which Pedro had left unpaid. To defray his

debt he was driven in 1368 to lay a hearth tax on Aquitaine, and the tax served as a pretext for an outbreak of the long-boarded discontent. Charles was now ready for open action. He had won over the most powerful among the Gascon nobles, and their influence secured the rejection of the tax in a parliament of the province which met at Bordeaux. The prince, pressed by debt, persisted, against the counsel of his wisest advisers, in exacting it; and the lords of Aquitaine at once appealed to the King of France. Such an appeal was a breach of the treaty of Bretigny, in which the French king had renounced his sovereignty over the south; but Charles had craftily delayed, year after year, the formal execution of the renunciations stipulated in the treaty, and he was still able to treat it as not binding on him. The success of Henry of Trastamara decided him to take immediate action, and in 1369 he summoned the Black Prince as Duke of Aquitaine to meet the appeal of the Gascon lords in his court.

354. The prince was maddened by the summons. "I will come," he replied, "but with helmet on head, and with sixty thousand men at my back." War, however, had hardly been declared when the ability with which Charles had laid his plans was seen in his seizure of Ponthieu, and in a rising of the whole country south of the Garonne. Du Guesclin returned in 1370 from Spain to throw life into the French attack. Two armies entered Guienne from the east; and a hundred castles with La Reole and Limoges threw open their gates to Du Guesclin. But the march of an English army from Calais upon

Paris recalled him from the south to guard the capital at a moment when the English leader advanced to recover Limoges, and the Black Prince, borne in a litter to its walls, stormed the town and sullied by a merciless massacre of its inhabitants the fame of his earlier exploits. Sickness, however, recalled him home in the spring of 1371; and the war, protracted by the caution of Charles, who forbade his armies to engage, did little but exhaust the energy and treasure of England. As yet, indeed, the French attack had made small impression on the south, where the English troops stoutly held their ground against Du Guesclin's inroads. But the protracted war drained Edward's resources, while the diplomacy of Charles was busy in rousing fresh dangers from Scotland and Castile. It was in vain that Edward looked for allies to the Flemish towns. The male line of the Counts of Flanders ended in Count Louis le Male; and the marriage of his daughter Margaret with Philip, Duke of Burgundy, a younger brother of the French king, secured Charles from attack along his northern border. In Scotland, the death of David Bruce put an end to Edward's schemes for a reunion of the two kingdoms; and his successor, Robert the Steward, renewed in 1371 the alliance with France.

355. Castile was a yet more serious danger; and an effort which Edward made to neutralize its attack only forced Henry of Trastamara to fling his whole weight into the struggle. The two daughters of Pedro had remained since their father's flight at Bordeaux. The elder of these was now wedded to

John of Gaunt, Edward's fourth son, whom he had created Duke of Lancaster on his previous marriage with Blanche, a daughter of Henry of Lancaster and the heiress of that house, while the younger was wedded to Edward's fifth son, the Earl of Cambridge. Edward's aim was that of raising again the party of King Pedro, and giving Henry of Trastamara work to do at home which would hinder his interposition in the war of Guienne. It was with this view that John of Gaunt on his marriage took the title of King of Castile. But no adherent of Pedro's cause stirred in Spain, and Henry replied to the challenge by sending a Spanish fleet to the channel. A decisive victory which this fleet won over an English convoy off Rochelle proved a fatal blow to the English cause. It wrested from Edward the mastery of the seas, and cut off all communication between England and Guienne. Charles was at once roused to new exertions. Poitou, Saintonge, and the Angoumois yielded to his general, Du Guesclin; and Rochelle was surrendered by its citizens in 1372. The next year saw a desperate attempt to restore the fortune of the English arms. A great army under John of Gaunt penetrated into the heart of France. But it found no foe to engage. Charles had forbidden any fighting. "If a storm rages over the land," said the king, coolly, "it disperses of itself; and so will it be with the English." Winter, in fact, overtook the Duke of Lancaster in the mountains of Auvergne, and a mere fragment of his host reached Bordeaux. The failure of this attack was the signal for a general defection, and

ere the summer of 1374 had closed, the two towns of Bordeaux and Bayonne were all that remained of the English possessions in Southern France. Even these were only saved by the exhaustion of the conquerors. The treasury of Charles was as utterly drained as the treasury of Edward, and the kings were forced to a truce.

356. Only fourteen years had gone by since the treaty of Bretigny raised England to a height of glory such as it had never known before. But the years had been years of a shame and suffering which stung the people to madness. Never had England fallen so low. Her conquests were lost, her shores insulted, her commerce swept from the seas. Within she was drained by the taxation and bloodshed of the war. Its popularity had wholly died away. When the commons were asked in 1354 whether they would assent to a treaty of perpetual peace if they might have it, "the said commons responded all, and altogether, 'Yes, yes!'" The population was thinned by the ravages of pestilence, for till 1369, which saw its last visitation, the black death returned again and again. The social strife, too, gathered bitterness with every effort at repression. It was in vain that parliament after parliament increased the severity of its laws. The demands of the parliament of 1376 show how inoperative the previous statutes of laborers had proved. They prayed that constables be directed to arrest all who infringed the statute, that no laborer should be allowed to take refuge in a town and become an artisan if there were need of his service in the

county from which he came, and that the king would protect lords and employers against the threats of death uttered by serfs who refused to serve. The reply of the royal council shows that statesmen, at any rate, were beginning to feel that repression might be pushed too far. The king refused to interfere by any further and harsher provisions between employers and employed, and left cases of breach of law to be dealt with in his ordinary courts of justice. On the one side he forbade the threatening gatherings which were already common in the country, but on the other he forbade the illegal exactions of the employers. With such a reply, however, the proprietary class were hardly likely to be content. Two years later the parliament of Gloucester called for a fugitive slave law, which would have enabled lords to seize their serfs in whatever county or town they found refuge, and in 1379 they prayed that judges might be sent five times a year into every shire to enforce the statute of laborers.

357. But the strife between employers and employed was not the only rift which was opening in the social structure. Suffering and defeat had stripped off the veil which hid from the nation the shallow and selfish temper of Edward the Third. His profligacy was now bringing him to a premature old age. He was sinking into the tool of his ministers and his mistresses. The glitter and profusion of his court, his splendid tournaments, his feasts, his table round, his new order of chivalry, the exquisite chapel of St. Stephen, whose frescoed walls were the glory of his palace at Westminster, the vast keep

which crowned the hill of Windsor, had ceased to throw their glamour round a king who tricked his parliament and swindled his creditors. Edward paid no debts. He had ruined the wealthiest bankers of Florence by a cool act of bankruptcy. The sturdier Flemish burghers only wrested payment from him by holding his royal person as their security. His own subjects fared no better than foreigners. The prerogative of "purveyance," by which the king in his progresses through the country had the right of first purchase of all that he needed at fair market price, became a galling oppression in the hands of a bankrupt king who was always moving from place to place. "When men hear of your coming," Archbishop Islip wrote to Edward, "everybody at once for sheer fear sets about hiding or eating or getting rid of their geese and chickens or other possessions, that they may not utterly lose them through your arrival. The purveyors and servants of your court seize on men and horses in the midst of their field work. They seize on the very bullocks that are at plow or at sowing, and force them to work for two or three days at a time without a penny of payment. It is no wonder that men make dole and murmur at your approach, for, as the truth is in God, I myself, whenever I hear a rumor of it, be I at home or in chapter, or in church, or at study, nay, if I am saying mass, even I in my own person tremble in every limb." But these irregular exactions were little beside the steady pressure of taxation. Even in the years of peace, fifteenths and tenths, subsidies on wool and subsidies on leather, were

demanded and obtained from parliament; and with the outbreak of war the royal demands became heavier and more frequent. As failure followed failure, the expenses of each campaign increased: an ineffectual attempt to relieve Rochelle cost nearly a million; the march of John of Gaunt through France utterly drained the royal treasury. Nor were these legal supplies all that the king drew from the nation. He had repudiated his pledge to abstain from arbitrary taxation of imports and exports. He sold monopolies to the merchants in exchange for increased customs. He wrested supplies from the clergy by arrangements with the bishops or the pope. There were signs that Edward was longing to rid himself of the control of parliament altogether. The power of the houses seemed, indeed, as high as ever; great statutes were passed. Those of provisors and *præmunire* settled the relations of England to the Roman court. That of treason in 1352 defined that crime and its penalties. That of the staples in 1353 regulated the conditions of foreign trade and the privileges of the merchant guilds which conducted it. But, side by side with these exertions of influence, we note a series of steady encroachments by the crown on the power of the houses. If their petitions were granted, they were often altered in the royal ordinance which professed to embody them. A plan of demanding supplies for three years at once rendered the annual assembly of parliament less necessary. Its very existence was threatened by the convocation, in 1352 and 1353, of occasional councils with but a single knight from every shire and a

single burgess from a small number of the greater towns, which acted as parliament and granted subsidies.

358. What aided Edward above all in eluding or defying the constitutional restrictions on arbitrary taxation, as well as in these more insidious attempts to displace the parliament, was the lessening of the check which the baronage and the church had till now supplied. The same causes which had long been reducing the number of the greater lords who formed the upper house went steadily on. Under Edward the Second little more than seventy were commonly summoned to parliament; little more than forty were summoned under Edward the Third, and of these the bulk were now bound to the crown, partly by their employment on its service, partly by their interest in the continuance of the war. The heads of the baronage, too, were members of the royal family. Edward had carried out, on a far wider scale than before, the policy which had been more or less adhered to from the days of Henry the Third, that of gathering up in the hands of the royal house all the greater heritages of the land. The Black Prince was married to Joan of Kent, the heiress of Edward the First's younger son, Earl Edmund of Woodstock. His marriage with the heiress of the Earl of Ulster brought to the king's second son, Lionel Duke of Clarence, a great part of the possessions of the De Burghs. Later on, the possessions of the house of Bohun passed, by like matches, to his youngest son, Thomas of Woodstock, and to his grandson, Henry of Lancaster. But the

greatest English heritage fell to Edward's third living son, John of Gaunt, as he was called from his birth at Ghent during his father's Flemish campaign. Originally created Earl of Richmond, the death of his father-in-law, Henry of Lancaster, and of Henry's eldest daughter, raised John in his wife's right to the dukedom of Lancaster and the earldoms of Derby, Leicester, and Lincoln. But while the baronage were thus bound to the crown, they drifted more and more into an hostility with the church, which in time disabled the clergy from acting as a check on it. What rent the ruling classes in twain was the growing pressure of the war. The nobles and knighthood of the country, already half ruined by the rise in the labor market and the attitude of the peasantry, were pressed harder than ever by the repeated subsidies which were called for by the continuance of the struggle. In the hour of their distress they cast their eyes greedily—as in the Norman and Angevin days—on the riches of the church. Never had her wealth been greater. Out of a population of some three millions the ecclesiastics numbered between 20,000 and 30,000. Wild tales of their riches floated about the country. They were said to own in landed property alone more than a third of the soil, while their "spiritualities" in dues and offerings amounted to twice the king's revenue. Exaggerated as such statements were, the wealth of the church was really great; but even more galling to the nobles was its influence in the royal councils. The feudal baronage, flushed with a new pride by its victories at Crécy and Poitiers, looked with envy

and wrath at the throng of bishops around the council-board, and attributed to their love of peace the errors and sluggishness which had caused, as they held, the disasters of the war. To rob the church of wealth and of power became the aim of a great baronial party.

359. The efforts of the baronage, indeed, would have been fruitless had the spiritual power of the church remained as of old. But the clergy were rent by their own dissensions. The higher prelates were busy with the cares of political office, and severed from the lower priesthood by the scandalous inequality between the revenues of the wealthier ecclesiastics and the "poor parson" of the country. A bitter hatred divided the secular clergy from the regular; and this strife went fiercely on in the universities. Fitz-Ralph, the chancellor of Oxford, attributed to the friars the decline which was already being felt in the number of academical students, and the university checked by statute their practice of admitting mere children into their order. The clergy, too, at large shared in the discredit and unpopularity of the papacy. Though they suffered more than any other class from the exactions of Avignon, they were bound more and more to the papal cause. The very statutes which would have protected them were practically set aside by the treacherous diplomacy of the crown. At home and abroad the Roman see was too useful for the king to come to any actual breach with it. However much Edward might echo the bold words of his parliament, he shrank from an open contest which would

have added the papacy to his many foes, and which would at the same time have robbed him of his most effective means of wresting aids from the English clergy by private arrangement with the Roman court. Rome, indeed, was brought to waive its alleged right of appointing foreigners to English livings. But a compromise was arranged between the pope and the crown in which both united in the spoliation and enslavement of the church. The voice of chapters, of monks, of ecclesiastical patrons, went henceforth for nothing in the election of bishops or abbots, or the nomination to livings in the gift of churchmen. The crown recommended those whom it chose to the pope, and the pope nominated them to see or cure of souls. The treasuries of both king and pope profited by the arrangement; but we can hardly wonder that after a betrayal such as this the clergy placed little trust in statutes or royal protection, and bowed humbly before the claims of Rome.

360. But what weakened the clergy most was their severance from the general sympathies of the nation, their selfishness, and the worldliness of their temper. Immense as their wealth was, they bore as little as they could of the common burdens of the realm. They were still resolute to assert their exemption from the common justice of the land, though the mild punishments of the bishops' courts carried as little dismay as ever into the mass of disorderly clerks. But privileged as they thus held themselves against all interference from the lay world without them, they carried on a ceaseless interference with

the affairs of this lay world through their control over wills, contracts, and divorces. No figure was better known or more hated than the summoner who enforced the jurisdiction and levied the dues of their courts. By their directly religious offices they penetrated into the very heart of the social life about them. But, powerful as they were, their moral authority was fast passing away. The wealthier churchmen, with their curled hair and hanging sleeves, aped the costume of the knightly society from which they were drawn and to which they still really belonged. We see the general impression of their worldliness in Chaucer's pictures of the hunting monk and the courtly prioress, with her love-motto on her brooch. The older religious orders, in fact, had sunk into mere landowners, while the enthusiasm of the friars had in great part died away and left a crowd of impudent mendicants behind it. Wycliffe could soon, with general applause, denounce them as sturdy beggars, and declare that "the man who gives alms to a begging friar is ipso facto excommunicate."

361. It was this weakness of the baronage and church, and the consequent withdrawal of both as represented in the temporal and spiritual estates of the upper house from the active part which they had taken till now in checking the crown, that brought the lower house to the front. The knight of the shire was now finally joined with the burgess of the town to form the third estate of the realm; and this union of the trader and the country gentleman gave a vigor and weight to the action of the commons which their house could never have acquired had it

remained as elsewhere a mere gathering of burgesses. But it was only slowly and under the pressure of one necessity after another that the commons took a growing part in public affairs. Their primary business was with taxation, and here they stood firm against the evasions by which the king still managed to baffle their exclusive right of granting supplies by voluntary agreements with the merchants of the Staple. Their steady pressure at last obtained in 1362 an enactment that no subsidy should henceforth be set upon wool without assent of parliament, while purveyance was restricted by a provision that payments should be made for all things taken for the king's use in ready money. A hardly less important advance was made by the change of ordinances into statutes. Till this time, even when a petition of the houses was granted, the royal council had reserved to itself the right of modifying its form in the ordinance which professed to embody it. It was under color of this right that so many of the provisions made in parliament had hitherto been evaded or set aside. But the commons now met this abuse by a demand that on the royal assent being given their petitions should be turned without change into statutes of the realm and derive force of law from their entry on the rolls of parliament. The same practical sense was seen in their dealings with Edward's attempt to introduce occasional smaller councils with parliamentary powers. Such an assembly in 1353 granted a subsidy on wool. The parliament which met in the following year might have challenged its proceedings as null and void, but the commons more

wisely contented themselves with a demand that the ordinances passed in the preceding assembly should receive the sanction of the three estates. A precedent for evil was thus turned into a precedent for good, and though irregular gatherings of a like sort were for awhile occasionally held, they were soon seen to be fruitless and discontinued. But the commons long shrank from meddling with purely administrative matters. When Edward, in his anxiety to shift from himself the responsibility of the war, referred to them in 1354 for advice on one of the numerous propositions of peace, they referred him to the lords of his council. "Most dreaded lord," they replied, "as to this war and the equipment needful for it we are so ignorant and simple that we know not how nor have the power to devise. Wherefore we pray your Grace to excuse us in this matter, and that it please you with the advice of the great and wise persons of your council to ordain what seems best for you for the honor and profit of yourself and of your kingdom. And whatsoever shall be thus ordained by assent and agreement on the part of you and your lords we readily assent to and will hold it firmly established."

362. But humble as was their tone the growing power of the commons showed itself in significant changes. In 1363 the chancellor opened parliament with a speech in English, no doubt as a tongue intelligible to the members of the lower house. From a petition in 1376 that knights of the shire may be chosen by common election of the better folk of the shire and not merely nominated by the sheriff without due

election, as well as from an earlier demand that the sheriffs themselves should be disqualified from serving in parliament during their term of office, we see that the crown had already begun not only to feel the pressure of the commons but to meet it by foisting royal nominees on the constituencies. Such an attempt at packing the house would hardly have been resorted to had it not already proved too strong for direct control. A further proof of its influence was seen in a prayer of the parliament that lawyers practicing in the king's courts might no longer be eligible as knights of the shire. The petition marks the rise of a consciousness that the house was now no mere gathering of local representatives, but a national assembly, and that a seat in it could no longer be confined to dwellers within the bounds of this county or that. But it showed also a pressure for seats, a passing away of the old dread of being returned as a representative, and a new ambition to gain a place among the members of the commons. Whether they would or no, indeed, the commons were driven forward to a more direct interference with public affairs. From the memorable statute of 1322 their right to take equal part in all matters brought before parliament had been incontestable, and their waiver of much of this right faded away before the stress of time. Their assent was needed to the great ecclesiastical statutes which regulated the relation of the see of Rome to the realm. They naturally took a chief part in the enactment and re-enactment of the statute of laborers. The statute of the staple, with a host of smaller commercial and economical meas-

ures, were of their origination. But it was not till an open breach took place between the baronage and the prelates that their full weight was felt. In the parliament of 1371, on the resumption of the war, a noble taunted the church as an owl protected by the feathers which other birds had contributed, and which they had a right to resume when a hawk's approach threatened them. The worldly goods of the church, the metaphor hinted, had been bestowed on it for the common weal, and could be taken from it on the coming of a common danger. The threat was followed by a prayer that the chief offices of state, which had till now been held by the leading bishops, might be placed in lay hands. The prayer was at once granted: William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, resigned the chancellorship, another prelate the treasury, to lay dependents of the great nobles; and the panic of the clergy was seen in large grants which were voted by both convocations.

363. At the moment of their triumph the assailants of the church found a leader in John of Gaunt. The Duke of Lancaster now wielded the actual power of the crown. Edward himself was sinking into dotage. Of his sons, the Black Prince, who had never rallied from the hardships of his Spanish campaign, was fast drawing to the grave; he had lost a second son by death in childhood; the third, Lionel of Clarence, had died in 1368. It was his fourth son therefore, John of Gaunt, to whom the royal power mainly fell. By his marriage with the heiress of the house of Lancaster the duke had acquired lands and wealth, but he had no taste for the policy of the Lancastrian

house, or for acting as leader of the barons in any constitutional resistance to the crown. His pride, already quickened by the second match with Constance to which he owed his shadowy kingship of Castile, drew him to the throne; and the fortune which placed the royal power practically in his hands bound him only the more firmly to its cause. Men held that his ambition looked to the crown itself, for the approaching death of Edward and the Prince of Wales left but a boy, Richard, the son of the Black Prince, a child of but a few years old, and a girl, the daughter of the Duke of Clarence, between John and the throne. But the Duke's success fell short of his pride. In the campaign of 1373 he traversed France without finding a foe, and brought back nothing save a ruined army to English shores. The peremptory tone in which money was demanded for the cost of this fruitless march while the petitions of the parliament were set aside till it was granted, roused the temper of the commons. They requested—it is the first instance of such a practice—a conference with the lords, and while granting fresh subsidies prayed that the grant should be spent only on the war. The resentment of the government at this advance toward a control over the actual management of public affairs was seen in the calling of no parliament through the next two years. But the years were disastrous both at home and abroad. The war went steadily against the English arms. The long negotiations with the pope which went on at Bruges through 1375, and in which Wycliffe took part as one of the royal commissioners, ended in a

compromise by which Rome yielded nothing. The strife over the statute of laborers grew fiercer and fiercer, and a return of the plague heightened the public distress. Edward was now wholly swayed by Alice Perrers, and the duke shared his power with the royal mistress. But if we gather its tenor from the complaints of the succeeding parliament his administration was as weak as it was corrupt. The new lay ministers lent themselves to gigantic frauds. The chamberlain, Lord Latimer, bought up the royal debts and embezzled the public revenue. With Richard Lyons, a merchant through whom the king negotiated with the guild of the staple, he reaped enormous profits by raising the price of imports and by lending to the crown at usurious rates of interest. When the empty treasury forced them to call a parliament the ministers tampered with the elections through the sheriffs.

364. But the temper of the parliament which met in 1376, and which gained from after times the name of the Good Parliament, shows that these precautions had utterly failed. Even their promise to pillage the church had failed to win for the duke and his party the good-will of the lesser gentry or the wealthier burgesses who together formed the commons. Projects of wide constitutional and social change, of the humiliation and impoverishment of an estate of the realm, were profoundly distasteful to men already struggling with a social revolution on their own estates and in their own workshops. But it was not merely its opposition to the projects of Lancaster and his party among the baronage

which won for this assembly the name of the Good Parliament. Its action marked a new period in our parliamentary history, as it marked a new stage in the character of the national opposition to the misrule of the crown. Hitherto the task of resistance had devolved on the baronage, and had been carried out through risings of its feudal tenantry. But the misgovernment was now that of the baronage or of a main part of the baronage itself in actual conjunction with the crown. Only in the power of the commons lay any adequate means of peaceful redress. The old reluctance of the lower house to meddle with matters of state was roughly swept away, therefore, by the pressure of the time. The Black Prince, anxious to secure his child's succession by the removal of John of Gaunt, the prelates with William of Wykeham at their head, resolute again to take their place in the royal councils and to check the projects of ecclesiastical spoliation put forward by their opponents, alike found in it a body to oppose to the duke's administration. Backed by powers such as these, the action of the commons showed none of their old timidity or self-distrust. The presentation of a hundred and sixty petitions of grievances preluded a bold attack on the royal council. "Trusting in God, and standing with his followers before the nobles, whereof the chief was John Duke of Lancaster, whose doings were ever contrary," their speaker, Sir Peter de la Mare, denounced the mismanagement of the war, the oppressive taxation, and demanded an account of the expenditure. "What do these base and ignoble

knights attempt?" cried John of Gaunt. "Do they think they be kings or princes of the land?" But the movement was too strong to be stayed. Even the duke was silenced by the charges brought against the ministers. After a strict inquiry Latimer and Lyons were alike thrown into prison, Alice Perrers was banished, and several of the royal servants were driven from the court. At this moment the death of the Black Prince shook the power of the parliament. But it only heightened its resolve to secure the succession. His son, Richard of Bordeaux, as he was called from the place of his birth, was now a child of but ten years old; and it was known that doubts were whispered on the legitimacy of his birth and claim. An early marriage of his mother, Joan of Kent, a granddaughter of Edward the First, with the Earl of Salisbury had been annulled; but the Lancastrian party used this first match to throw doubts on the validity of her subsequent union with the Black Prince and on the right of Richard to the throne. The dread of Lancaster's ambition is the first indication of the approach of what was from this time to grow into the great difficulty of the realm, the question of the succession to the crown. From the death of Edward the Third to the death of Charles the First no English sovereign felt himself secure from rival claimants of his throne. As yet, however, the dread was a baseless one; the people were heartily with the prince and his child. The duke's proposal that the succession should be settled in case of Richard's death was rejected; and the boy himself was brought into parliament and acknowledged as heir of the crown.

365. To secure their work the commons ended by obtaining the addition of nine lords, with William of Wykeham and two other prelates among them, to the royal council. But the parliament was no sooner dismissed than the duke at once resumed his power. His anger at the blow which had been dealt at his projects was no doubt quickened by resentment at the sudden advance of the lower house. From the commons who shrank even from giving counsel on matters of state to the commons who dealt with such matters as their special business, who investigated royal accounts, who impeached royal ministers, who dictated changes in the royal advisers, was an immense step. But it was a step which the duke believed could be retraced. His haughty will flung aside all restraints of law. He dismissed the new lords and prelates from the council. He called back Alice Perrers and the disgraced ministers. He declared the Good Parliament no parliament, and did not suffer its petitions to be enrolled as statutes. He imprisoned Peter de la Mare, and confiscated the possessions of William of Wykeham. His attack on this prelate was an attack on the clergy at large, and the attack became significant when the duke gave his open patronage to the denunciations of church property which formed the favorite theme of John Wycliffe. To Wycliffe such a prelate as Wykeham symbolized the evil which held down the church. His administrative ability, his political energy, his wealth and the colleges at Winchester and at Oxford which it enabled him to raise before his death, were all equally hateful. It was this wealth, this intermed-

dling with worldly business, which the ascetic reformer looked upon as the curse that robbed prelates and churchmen of that spiritual authority which could alone meet the vice and suffering of the time. Whatever baser motives might spur Lancaster and his party, their projects of spoliation must have seemed to Wycliffe projects of enfranchisement for the church. Poor and powerless in worldly matters, he held that she would have the wealth and might of heaven at her command. Wycliffe's theory of church and state had led him long since to contend that the property of the clergy might be seized and employed like other property for national purposes. Such a theory might have been left, as other daring theories of the schoolmen had been left, to the disputation of the schools. But the clergy were bitterly galled when the first among English teachers threw himself hotly on the side of the party which threatened them with spoliation, and argued in favor of their voluntary abandonment of all church property and of a return to their original poverty. They were roused to action when Wycliffe came forward as the theological bulwark of the Lancastrian party at a moment when the clergy were freshly outraged by the overthrow of the bishops and the plunder of Wykeham. They forced the king to cancel the sentence of banishment from the precincts of the court which had been directed against the bishop of Winchester, by refusing any grant of supply in convocation till William of Wykeham took his seat in it. But in the prosecution of Wycliffe they resolved to return blow for blow. In February, 1377, he

was summoned before bishop Courtenay of London to answer for his heretical propositions concerning the wealth of the church.

366. The Duke of Lancaster accepted the challenge as really given to himself, and stood by Wycliffe's side in the consistory court at St. Paul's. But no trial took place. Fierce words passed between the nobles and the prelate: the duke himself was said to have threatened to drag Courtenay out of the church by the hair of his head; at last the London populace, to whom John of Gaunt was hateful, burst into their bishop's rescue, and Wycliffe's life was saved with difficulty by the aid of the soldiery. But his boldness only grew with the danger. A papal bull which was procured by the bishops, directing the university to condemn and arrest him, extorted from him a bold defiance. In a defense circulated widely through the kingdom and laid before parliament, Wycliffe broadly asserted that no man could be excommunicated by the pope "unless he were first excommunicated by himself." He denied the right of the church to exact or defend temporal privileges by spiritual censures, declared that a church might justly be deprived by the king or lay lords of its property for defect of duty, and defended the subjection of ecclesiastics to civil tribunals. It marks the temper of the time and the growing severance between the church and the nation that, bold as the defiance was, it won the support of the people as of the crown. When Wycliffe appeared at the close of the year in Lambeth Chapel to answer the archbishop's summons, a message from the court forbade

the primate to proceed, and the Londoners broke in and dissolved the session.

367. Meanwhile the duke's unscrupulous tampering with elections had packed the parliament of 1377 with his adherents. The work of the Good Parliament was undone, and the commons petitioned for the restoration of all who had been impeached by their predecessors. The needs of the treasury were met by a novel form of taxation. To the earlier land-tax, to the tax on personalty which dated from the Saladin tithe, to the customs duties which had grown into importance in the last two reigns, was now added a tax which reached every person in the realm, a poll-tax of a groat a head. In this tax were sown the seeds of future trouble, but when the parliament broke up in March the duke's power seemed completely secured. Hardly three months later it was wholly undone. In June Edward the Third died in a dishonored old age, robbed on his death-bed even of his rings by the mistress to whom he clung, and the accession of his grandson, Richard the Second, changed the whole face of affairs. The duke withdrew from court, and sought a reconciliation with the party opposed to him. The men of the Good Parliament surrounded the new king, and a parliament which assembled in October took vigorously up its work. Peter de la Mare was released from prison and replaced in the chair of the house of commons. The action of the lower house indeed was as trenchant and comprehensive as that of the Good Parliament itself. In petition after petition the commons demanded the confirmation of older

rights and the removal of modern abuses. They complained of administrative wrongs such as the practice of purveyance, of abuses of justice, of the oppressions of officers of the exchequer and of the forest, of the ill state of the prisons, of the custom of "maintenance" by which lords extended their livery to shoals of disorderly persons and overawed the courts by means of them. Amid ecclesiastical abuses they noted the state of the church courts, and the neglect of the laws of provisors. They demanded that the annual assembly of parliament, which had now become customary, should be defined by law, and that bills once sanctioned by the crown should be forthwith turned into statutes without further amendment or change on the part of the royal council. With even greater boldness they laid hands on the administration itself. They not only demanded that the evil counselors of the last reign should be removed, and that the treasurer of the subsidy on wool should account for its expenditure to the lords, but that the royal council should be named in parliament, and chosen from members of either estate of the realm. Though a similar request for the nomination of the officers of the royal household was refused, their main demand was granted. It was agreed that the great officers of state, the chancellor, treasurer, and barons of exchequer, should be named by the lords in parliament, and removed from their offices during the king's "tender years" only on the advice of the lords. The pressure of the war, which rendered the existing taxes insufficient, gave the house a fresh hold on the crown. While granting a

new subsidy in the form of a land and property tax, the commons restricted its proceeds to the war, and assigned two of their members, William Walworth and John Philpot, as a standing committee to regulate its expenditure. The successor of this parliament in the following year demanded and obtained an account of the way in which the subsidy had been spent.

368. The minority of the king, who was but eleven years old at his accession; the weakness of the royal council amidst the strife of the baronial factions; above all, the disasters of the war without and the growing anarchy within the realm itself—alone made possible this startling assumption of the executive power by the houses. The shame of defeat abroad was being added to the misery and discomfort at home. The French war ran its disastrous course. One English fleet was beaten by the Spaniards, a second sunk by a storm; and a campaign in the heart of France ended, like its predecessors, in disappointment and ruin. Meanwhile the strife between employers and employed was kindling into civil war. The parliament, drawn as it was wholly from the proprietary classes, struggled as fiercely for the mastery of the laborers as it struggled for the mastery of the crown. The Good Parliament had been as strenuous in demanding the enforcement of the statute of laborers as any of its predecessors. In spite of statutes, however, the market remained in the laborers' hands. The comfort of the worker rose with his wages. Men who had "no land to live on but their hands disdained to live on penny ale or

bacon, and called for fresh flesh or fish, fried or baked, and that hot and hotter for chilling of their maw." But there were dark shades in this general prosperity of the labor class. There were seasons of the year during which employment for the floating mass of labor was hard to find. In the long interval between harvest-tide and harvest-tide work and food were alike scarce in every homestead of the time. Some lines of William Longland give us the picture of a farm of the day. "I have no penny pullets for to buy, nor neither geese nor pigs, but two green cheeses, a few curds and cream, and an oaten cake, and two loaves of beans and bran baked for my children. I have no salt bacon nor no cooked meat collops for to make, but I have parsley and leeks and many cabbage plants, and eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare to draw a-field my dung while the drought lasteth, and by this livelihood we must all live till Lammas-tide [August], and by that I hope to have harvest in my croft." But it was not till Lammas-tide that high wages and the new corn bade "hunger go to sleep," and during the long spring and summer the free laborer and the "waster that will not work but wander about, that will eat no bread but the finest wheat, nor drink but of the best and brownest ale," was a source of social and political danger. "He grieveth him against God and grudgeth against reason, and then curseth he the king and all his council after such law to allow laborers to grieve." Such a smouldering mass of discontent as this needed but a spark to burst into flame;

and the spark was found in the imposition of fresh taxation.

369. If John of Gaunt was fallen from his old power he was still the leading noble in the realm, and it is possible that dread of the encroachments of the last parliament on the executive power drew after a time even the new advisers of the crown closer to him. Whatever was the cause, he again came to the front. But the supplies voted in the past year were wasted in his hands. A fresh expedition against France under the duke himself ended in failure before the walls of St. Malo, while at home his brutal household was outraging public order by the murder of a knight who had incurred John's anger in the precincts of Westminster. So great was the resentment of the Londoners at this act that it became needful to summon parliament elsewhere than to the capital; and in 1378 the houses met at Gloucester. The duke succeeded in bringing the lords to refuse those conferences with the commons which had given unity to the action of the late parliament, but he was foiled in an attack on the clerical privilege of sanctuary and in the threats which his party still directed against church property, while the commons forced the royal council to lay before them the accounts of the last subsidy and to appoint a commission to examine into the revenue of the crown. Unhappily the financial policy of the preceding year was persisted in. The check before St. Malo had been somewhat redeemed by treaties with Charles of Evreux and the Duke of Brittany which secured to England the right of holding Cherbourg

and Brest; but the cost of these treaties only swelled the expenses of the war. The fresh supplies voted at Gloucester proved insufficient for their purpose, and a parliament in the spring of 1379 renewed the poll-tax in a graduated form. But the proceeds of the tax proved miserably inadequate, and when fresh debts beset the crown in 1380 a return was again made to the old system of subsidies. But these failed in their turn; and at the close of the year the parliament again fell back on a severer poll-tax. One of the attractions of the new mode of taxation seems to have been that the clergy, who adopted it for themselves, paid in this way a larger share of the burthens of the state; but the chief ground for its adoption lay, no doubt, in its bringing within the net of the tax-gatherer a class which had hitherto escaped him, men such as the free laborer, the village smith, the village tiler. But few courses could have been more dangerous. The poll-tax not only brought the pressure of the war home to every household; it goaded into action precisely the class which was already seething with discontent. The strife between labor and capital was going on as fiercely as ever in country and in town. The landlords were claiming new services, or forcing men who looked on themselves as free to prove they were no villeins by law. The free laborer was struggling against the attempt to exact work from him at low wages. The wandering workman was being seized and branded as a vagrant. The abbey towns were struggling for freedom against the abbeys. The craftsmen within boroughs were carrying on the same strife against

employer and craft guild. And all this mass of discontent was being heightened and organized by agencies with which the government could not cope. The poorer villeins and the free laborers had long since banded together in secret conspiracies which the wealthier villeins supported with money. The return of soldiers from the war threw over the land a host of broken men, skilled in arms, and ready to take part in any rising. The begging friars, wandering and gossiping from village to village and street to street, shared the passions of the class from which they sprang. Priests like Ball openly preached the doctrines of communism. And to these had been recently added a fresh agency which could hardly fail to stir a new excitement. With the practical ability which marked his character, Wycliffe set on foot about this time a body of poor preachers to supply, as he held, the place of those wealthier clergy who had lost their hold on the land. The coarse sermons, bare feet, and russet dress of these "Simple Priests" moved the laughter of rector and canon, but they proved a rapid and effective means of diffusing Wycliffe's protests against the wealth and sluggishness of the clergy, and we can hardly doubt that in the general turmoil their denunciation of ecclesiastical wealth passed often into more general denunciations of the proprietary classes.

370. As the spring went by quaint rhymes passed through the country, and served as a summons to revolt. "John Ball," ran one, "greeteth you all, and doth for to understand he hath rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill, God speed every

dele." "Help truth," ran another, "and truth shall help you! Now reigneth pride in price, and covetise is counted wise, and lechery withouten shame, and gluttony withouten blame. Envy reigneth with treason, and sloth is take in great season. God to bote, for now is tyme!" We recognize Ball's hand in the yet more stirring missives of "Jack the Miller" and "Jack the Carter." "Jack Miller asketh help to turn his mill aright. He hath grounden small, small: the King's Son of heaven he shall pay for all. Look thy mill go aright with the four sailes, and the post stand with steadfastness. With right and with might, with skill and with will; let might help right, and skill go before will, and right before might, so goeth our mill aright." "Jack Carter," ran the companion missive, "prays you all that ye make a good end of that ye have begun, and do well, and aye better and better: for at the even men hear-eth the day." "Falseness and guile," sang Jack Trewman, "have reigned too long, and truth hath been set under a lock, and falseness and guile reign-eth in every stock. No man may come truth to, but if he sing 'si dederó.' True love is away that was so good, and clerks for wealth work them woe. God do bote, for now is time." In the rude jingle of these lines began for England the literature of political controversy: they are the first predecessors of the pamphlets of Milton and of Burke. Rough as they are, they express clearly enough the mingled passions which met in the revolt of the peasants: their longing for a right rule, for plain and simple justice; their scorn of the immorality of the nobles

and the infamy of the court; their resentment at the perversion of the law to the cause of oppression.

371. From the eastern and midland counties the restlessness spread to all England south of the Thames. But the grounds of discontent varied with every district. The actual outbreak began on the 5th of June at Dartford, where a tiler killed one of the collectors of the poll-tax in vengeance for a brutal outrage on his daughter. The county at once rose in arms. Canterbury, where "the whole town was of their mind," threw open its gates to the insurgents who plundered the archbishop's palace and dragged John Ball from his prison. A hundred thousand Kentishmen gathered round Walter Tyler of Essex and John Hales of Malling to march upon London. Their grievance was mainly a political one. Villeinage was unknown in Kent. As the peasants poured toward Blackheath indeed every lawyer who fell into their hands was put to death; "not till all these were killed would the land enjoy its old freedom again," the Kentishmen shouted as they fired the houses of the stewards and flung the rolls of the manor-courts into the flames. But this action can hardly have been due to anything more than sympathy with the rest of the realm, the sympathy which induced the same men when pilgrims from the north brought news that John of Gaunt was setting free his bondmen to send to the duke an offer to make him lord and king of England. Nor was their grievance a religious one. Lollardry can have made little way among men whose grudge against the archbishop of Canterbury sprang from his dis-

couragement of pilgrimages. Their discontent was simply political; they demanded the suppression of the poll-tax and better government; their aim was to slay the nobles and wealthier clergy, to take the king into their own hands, and pass laws which should seem good to the commons of the realm. The whole population joined the Kentishmen as they marched along, while the nobles were paralyzed with fear. The young king—he was but a boy of sixteen—addressed them from a boat on the river; but the refusal of his council under the guidance of Archbishop Sudbury to allow him to land kindled the peasants to fury, and with cries of “treason” the great mass rushed on London. On the 13th of June its gates were flung open by the poorer artisans within the city, and the stately palace of John of Gaunt at the Savoy, the new inn of the lawyers at the temple, the houses of the foreign merchants, were soon in a blaze. But the insurgents, as they proudly boasted, were “seekers of truth and justice, not thieves or robbers,” and a plunderer found carrying off a silver vessel from the sack of the Savoy was flung with his spoil into the flames. Another body of insurgents encamped at the same time to the east of the city. In Essex and the eastern counties the popular discontent was more social than political. The demands of the peasants were that bondage should be abolished, that tolls and imposts on trade should be done away with, that “no acre of land which is held in bondage or villeinage be held at higher rate than fourpence a year,” in other words for a money commutation of all villein services. Their rising had been

even earlier than that of the Kentishmen. Before Whitsuntide an attempt to levy the poll-tax gathered crowds of peasants together, armed with clubs, rusty swords, and bows. The royal commissioners who were sent to repress the tumult were driven from the field, and the Essex men marched upon London on one side of the river as the Kentishmen marched on the other. The evening of the 13th, the day on which Tyler entered the city, saw them encamped without its walls at Mile-end. At the same moment Highbury and the northern heights were occupied by the men of Hertfordshire and the villeins of St. Alban's, where a strife between abbot and town had been going on since the days of Edward the Second.

372. The royal council with the young king had taken refuge in the Tower, and their aim seems to have been to divide the forces of the insurgents. On the morning of the fourteenth, therefore, Richard rode from the Tower to Mile-end to meet the Essex men. "I am your king and lord, good people," the boy began with a fearlessness which marked his bearing throughout the crisis; "what will you?" "We will that you free us for ever," shouted the peasants, "us and our lands; and that we be never named nor held for serfs!" "I grant it," replied Richard; and he bade them go home, pledging himself at once to issue charters of freedom and amnesty. A shout of joy welcomed the promise. Throughout the day more than thirty clerks were busied writing letters of pardon and emancipation, and with these the mass of the Essex men and the men of Hertfordshire withdrew quietly to their homes. But while

the king was successful at Mile-end a terrible doom had fallen on the councilors he left behind him. Richard had hardly quitted the Tower when the Kentishmen who had spent the night within the city appeared at its gates. The general terror was shown ludicrously enough when they burst in, and, taking the panic-stricken knights of the royal household in rough horse-play by the beard, promised to be their equals and good comrades in the days to come. But the horse-play changed into dreadful earnest when they found that Richard had escaped their grasp, and the discovery of Archbishop Sudbury and other ministers in the chapel changed their fury into a cry for blood. The primate was dragged from his sanctuary and beheaded. The same vengeance was wreaked on the treasurer and the chief commissioner for the levy of the hated poll-tax, the merchant Richard Lyons who had been impeached by the Good Parliament. Richard meanwhile had ridden round the northern wall of the city to the Wardrobe near Blackfriars, and from this new refuge he opened his negotiations with the Kentish insurgents. Many of these dispersed at the news of the king's pledge to the men of Essex, but a body of 30,000 still surrounded Wat Tyler when Richard on the morning of the fifteenth encountered that leader by a mere chance at Smithfield. Hot words passed between his train and the peasant chieftain, who advanced to confer with the king, and a threat from Tyler brought on a brief struggle in which the Mayor of London, William Walworth, struck him with his dagger to the ground. "Kill! kill!" shouted the crowd, "they

have slain our captain!" But Richard faced the Kentishmen with the same cool courage with which he faced the men of Essex. "What need ye, my masters!" cried the boy-king as he rode boldly up to the front of the bowmen. "I am your captain and your king; follow me!" The hopes of the peasants centered in the young sovereign; one aim of their rising had been to free him from the evil counselors who, as they believed, abused his youth; and at his word they followed him with a touching loyalty and trust till he entered the Tower. His mother welcomed him within its walls with tears of joy. "Rejoice and praise God," Richard answered, "for I have recovered to-day my heritage which was lost and the realm of England!" But he was compelled to give the same pledge of freedom to the Kentishmen as at Mile-end, and it was only after receiving his letters of pardon and emancipation that the yeomen dispersed to their homes.

373. The revolt, indeed, was far from being at an end. As the news of the rising ran through the country the discontent almost everywhere broke into flame. There were outbreaks in every shire south of the Thames as far westward as Devonshire. In the north tumults broke out at Beverley and Scarborough, and Yorkshire and Lancashire made ready to rise. The eastern counties were in one wild turmoil of revolt. At Cambridge the townsmen burned the charters of the University and attacked the colleges. A body of peasants occupied St. Alban's. In Norfolk a Norwich artisan, called John the Litster or Dyer, took the title of king of the commons, and

marching through the country at the head of a mass of peasants compelled the nobles whom he captured to act as his meat-tasters and to serve him on their knees during his repast. The story of St. Edmundsbury shows us what was going on in Suffolk. Ever since the accession of Edward the Third the townsmen and the villeins of their lands around had been at war with the abbot and his monks. The old and more oppressive servitude had long passed away, but the later abbots had set themselves against the policy of concession and conciliation which had brought about this advance toward freedom. The gates of the town were still in the abbot's hands. He had succeeded in enforcing his claim to the wardship of all orphans born within his domain. From claims such as these the town could never feel itself safe so long as mysterious charters from pope or king, interpreted cunningly by the wit of the new lawyer class, lay stored in the abbey archives. But the archives contained other and hardly less formidable documents than these. Untroubled by the waste of war, the religious houses profited more than any other landowners by the general growth of wealth. They had become great proprietors, money lenders to their tenants, extortionate as the Jew whom they had banished from their land. There were few townsmen of St. Edmund's who had not some bonds laid up in the abbey registry. In 1327 one band of debtors had a covenant lying there for the payment of 500 marks and fifty casks of wine. Another company of the wealthier burgesses were joint debtors on a bond for £10,000. The new spirit of commer-

cial activity joined with the troubles of the time to throw the whole community into the abbot's hands.

374. We can hardly wonder that riots, lawsuits, and royal commissions marked the relation of the town and abbey under the first two Edwards. Under the third came an open conflict. In 1327 the townsmen burst into the great house, drove the monks into the choir, and dragged them thence to the town prison. The abbey itself was sacked; chalices, missals, chasubles, tunicles, altar frontals, the books of the library, the very vats and dishes of the kitchen, all disappeared. The monks estimated their losses at £10,000. But the townsmen aimed at higher booty than this. The monks were brought back from prison to their own chapter-house, and the spoil of their registry, papal bulls and royal charters, deeds and bonds and mortgages, were laid before them. Amid the wild threats of the mob they were forced to execute a grant of perfect freedom and of a guild to the town as well as of free release to their debtors. Then they were left masters of the ruined house. But all control over town or land was gone. Through spring and summer no rent or fine was paid. The bailiffs and other officers of the abbey did not dare to show their faces in the streets. News came at last that the abbot was in London, appealing for redress to the court, and the whole county was at once on fire. A crowd of rustics, maddened at the thought of revived claims of serfage, of interminable suits of law, poured into the streets of the town. From thirty-two of the

neighboring villages the priests marched at the head of their flocks as on a new crusade. The wild mass of men, women, and children, 20,000 in all, as men guessed, rushed again on the abbey, and for four November days the work of destruction went on unhindered. When gate, stables, granaries, kitchen, infirmary, hostelry had gone up in flames, the multitude swept away to the granges and barns of the abbey farms. Their plunder shows what vast agricultural proprietors the monks had become. A thousand horses, 120 plow-oxen, 200 cows, 300 bullocks, 300 hogs, 10,000 sheep were driven off, and granges and barns burned to the ground. It was judged afterward that £60,000 would hardly cover the loss.

375. Weak as was the government of Mortimer and Isabella, the appeal of the abbot against this outrage was promptly heeded. A royal force quelled the riot, thirty carts full of prisoners were dispatched to Norwich; twenty-four of the chief townsmen with thirty-two of the village priests were convicted as aiders and abettors of the attack on the abbey, and twenty were summarily hanged. Nearly 200 persons remained under sentence of outlawry, and for five weary years their case dragged on in the king's courts. At last matters ended in a ludicrous outrage. Irritated by repeated breaches of promise on the abbot's part, the outlawed burgesses seized him as he lay in his manor of Chevington, robbed and bound him, and carried him off to London. There he was hurried from street to street lest his hiding-place should be detected, till opportunity offered for shipping him off to Brabant. The primate and the

pope leveled their excommunications against the abbot's captors in vain, and though he was at last discovered and brought home, it was probably with some pledge of the arrangement which followed in 1332. The enormous damages assessed by the royal justices were remitted, the outlawry of the townsmen was reversed, the prisoners were released. On the other hand, the deeds which had been stolen were again replaced in the archives of the abbey, and the charters which had been extorted from the monks were formally cancelled.

376. The spirit of townsmen and villeins remained crushed by their failure, and throughout the reign of Edward the Third the oppression against which they had risen went on without a check. It was no longer the rough blow of sheer force; it was the more delicate but more pitiless tyranny of the law. At Richard's accession, Prior John of Cambridge, in the vacancy of the abbot, was in charge of the house. The prior was a man skilled in all the arts of his day. In sweetness of voice, in knowledge of sacred song, his eulogists pronounced him superior to Orpheus, to Nero, and to one yet more illustrious in the Bury cloister, though obscure to us, the Breton Belgabred. John was "industrious and subtle," and subtlety and industry found their scope in suit after suit with the burgesses and farmers around him. "Faithfully he strove," says the monastic chronicler, "with the villeins of Bury for the rights of his house." The townsmen he owned specially as his "adversaries," but it was the rustics who were to show what a hate he had won. On the 15th of June,

the day of Wat Tyler's fall, the howl of a great multitude round his manor-house at Mildenhall broke roughly on the chantings of Prior John. He strove to fly, but he was betrayed by his own servants, judged in rude mockery of the law by villein and bondsman, condemned and killed. The corpse lay naked in the open field, while the mob poured unresisted into Bury. Bearing the prior's head on a lance before them through the streets, the frenzied throng at last reached the gallows where the head of one of the royal judges, Sir John Cavendish, was already impaled; and pressing the cold lips together in mockery of their friendship set them side by side. Another head soon joined them. The abbey gates were burst open, and the cloister filled with a maddened crowd, howling for a new victim, John Lackenheath, the warder of the barony. Few knew him as he stood among the group of trembling monks, but he courted death with a contemptuous courage. "I am the man you seek," he said, stepping forward; and in a minute, with a mighty roar of "Devil's son! Monk! Traitor!" he was swept to the gallows, and his head hacked from his shoulders. Then the crowd rolled back again to the abbey gate, and summoned the monks before them. They told them that now for a long time they had oppressed their fellows, the burgesses of Bury; wherefore they willed that in the sight of the commons they should forthwith surrender their bonds and charters. The monks brought the parchments to the market-place; many which were demanded they swore they could not find. A compromise was at last patched up; and it was

agreed that the charters should be surrendered till the future abbot should confirm the liberties of the town. Then, unable to do more, the crowd ebbed away.

377. A scene less violent but even more picturesque went on the same day at St. Alban's. William Grindcobbe, the leader of its townsmen, returned with one of the charters of emancipation which Richard had granted, after his interview at Mile-end, to the men of Essex and Hertfordshire, and, breaking into the abbey precincts at the head of the burghers, forced the abbot to deliver up the charters which bound the town in bondage to his house. But a more striking proof of servitude than any charters could give remained in the mill-stones, which, after a long suit at law, had been adjudged to the abbey and placed within its cloister as a triumphant witness that no townsman might grind corn within the domain of the abbey save at the abbot's mill. Bursting into the cloister, the burghers now tore the mill-stones from the floor, and broke them into small pieces, "like blessed bread in church," which each might carry off to show something of the day when their freedom was won again. But it was hardly won when it was lost anew. The quiet withdrawal and dispersion of the peasant armies with their charters of emancipation gave courage to the nobles. Their panic passed away. The warlike Bishop of Norwich fell, lance in hand, on Litster's camp, and scattered the peasants of Norfolk at the first shock. Richard, with an army of 40,000 men, marched in triumph through Kent and Essex, and spread

terror by the ruthlessness of his executions. At Waltham he was met by the display of his own recent charters and a protest from the Essex men that "they were, so far as freedom went, the peers of their lords." But they were to learn the worth of a king's word. "Villeins you were," answered Richard, "and villeins you are. In bondage you shall abide, and that not your old bondage, but a worse!" The stubborn resistance which he met showed that the temper of the people was not easily broken. The villagers of Billericay threw themselves into the woods and fought two hard fights before they were reduced to submission. It was only by threats of death that verdicts of guilty could be wrung from Essex jurors when the leaders of the revolt were brought before them. Grindecobbe was offered his life if he would persuade his followers at St. Alban's to restore the charters they had wrung from the monks. He turned bravely to his fellow-townsmen and bade them take no thought for his trouble. "If I die," he said, "I shall die for the cause of the freedom we have won, counting myself happy to end my life by such a martyrdom. Do then to-day as you would have done had I been killed yesterday." But repression went pitilessly on, and through the summer and the autumn 7000 men are said to have perished on the gallows or the field.

CHAPTER IV.

RICHARD THE SECOND.

1381—1400.

378. TERRIBLE as were the measures of repression which followed the peasant revolt, and violent as was the passion of reaction which raged among the proprietary classes at its close, the end of the rising was in fact secured. The words of Grindecobbe ere his death were a prophecy which time fulfilled. Cancel charters of manumission as the council might, serfage was henceforth a doomed and perishing thing. The dread of another outbreak hung round the employer. The attempts to bring back obsolete services quietly died away. The old process of enfranchisement went quietly on. During the century and a half which followed the peasant revolt villeinage died out so rapidly that it became a rare and antiquated thing. The class of small freeholders sprang fast out of the wreck of it into numbers and importance. In twenty years more they were in fact recognized as the basis of our electoral system in every English county. The labor statutes proved as ineffective as of old in enchaining labor or reducing its price. A hundred years after the Black Death the wages of an English laborer were sufficient to purchase twice the amount of the necessaries of life which could have been obtained for the wages paid under Edward the Third. The incidental descriptions of the life of the working classes which we find in *Piers Plowman* show that this increase of

social comfort had been going on even during the troubled period which preceded the outbreak of the peasants, and it went on faster after the revolt was over. But inevitable as such a progress was, every step of it was taken in the teeth of the wealthier classes. Their temper, indeed, at the close of the rising, was that of men frenzied by panic and the taste of blood. They scouted all notion of concession. The stubborn will of the conquered was met by as stubborn a will in their conquerors. The royal council showed its sense of the danger of a mere policy of resistance, by submitting the question of enfranchisement to the parliament which assembled in November, 1381, with words which suggested a compromise. "If you desire to enfranchise and set at liberty the said serfs," ran the royal message, "by your common assent, as the king has been informed that some of you desire, he will consent to your prayer." But no thoughts of compromise influenced the landowners in their reply. The king's grant and letters, the parliament answered with perfect truth, were legally null and void: their serfs were their goods, and the king could not take their goods from them but by their own consent. "And this consent," they ended, "we have never given and never will give, were we all to die in one day." Their temper indeed expressed itself in legislation which was a fit sequel to the statutes of laborers. They forbade the child of any tiller of the soil to be apprenticed in a town. They prayed the king to ordain "that no bondman or bondwoman shall place their children at school, as has been done, so as to

advance their children in the world by their going into the church." The new colleges which were being founded at the universities at this moment closed their gates upon villeins.

379. The panic which produced this frenzied reaction against all projects of social reform produced inevitably as frenzied a panic of reaction against all plans for religious reform. Wycliffe had been supported by the Lancastrian party till the very eve of the peasant revolt. But with the rising his whole work seemed suddenly undone. The quarrel between the baronage and the church on which his political action had as yet been grounded was hushed in the presence of a common danger. His "poor preachers" were looked upon as missionaries of socialism. The friars charged Wycliffe with being a "sower of strife, who by his serpent-like instigation had set the serf against his lord," and though he tossed back the charge with disdain, he had to bear a suspicion which was justified by the conduct of some of his followers. John Ball, who had figured in the front rank of the revolt, was falsely named as one of his adherents, and was alleged to have denounced in his last hour the conspiracy of the "Wycliffites." Wycliffe's most prominent scholar, Nicholas Herford, was said to have openly approved the brutal murder of Archbishop Sudbury. Whatever belief such charges might gain, it is certain that from this moment all plans for the reorganization of the church were confounded in the general odium which attached to the projects of the peasant leaders, and that any hope of ecclesiastical reform at the hands of the baronage and

the parliament was at an end. But even if the peasant revolt had not deprived Wycliffe of the support of the aristocratic party with whom he had hitherto co-operated, their alliance must have been dissolved by the new theological position which he had already taken up. Some months before the outbreak of the insurrection, he had by one memorable step passed from the position of a reformer of the discipline and political relations of the church to that of a protester against its cardinal beliefs. If there was one doctrine upon which the supremacy of the mediæval church rested, it was the doctrine of transubstantiation. It was by his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle which was wrought in the mass that the lowliest priest was raised high above princes. With the formal denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation which Wycliffe issued in the spring of 1381 began that great movement of religious revolt which ended more than a century after in the establishment of religious freedom by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic church. The act was the bolder that he stood utterly alone. The University of Oxford, in which his influence had been hitherto all-powerful, at once condemned him. John of Gaunt enjoined him to be silent. Wycliffe was presiding as doctor of divinity over some disputations in the schools of the Augustinian Canons, when his academical condemnation was publicly read, but, though startled for the moment, he at once challenged chancellor or doctor to disprove the conclusions at which he had arrived. The prohibition of the Duke of Lancaster

he met by an open avowal of his teaching, a confession which closes proudly with the quiet words, "I believe that in the end the truth will conquer."

380. For the moment his courage dispelled the panic around him. The universities responded to his appeal, and, by displacing his opponents from office, tacitly adopted his cause. But Wycliffe no longer looked for support to the learned or wealthier classes on whom he had hitherto relied. He appealed, and the appeal is memorable as the first of such a kind in our history, to England at large. With an amazing industry he issued tract after tract in the tongue of the people itself. The dry, syllogistic Latin, the abstruse and involved argument which the great doctor had addressed to his academic hearers, were suddenly flung aside, and by a transition, which marks the wonderful genius of the man, the schoolman was transformed into the pamphleteer. If Chaucer is the father of our later English poetry, Wycliffe is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts, the speech of the plowman and the trader of the day, though colored with the picturesque phraseology of the Bible, is in its literary use as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip. Once fairly freed from the trammels of unquestioning belief, Wycliffe's mind worked fast in its career of skepticism. Pardons, indulgences, absolutions, pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints, worship of their images, worship of the saints them-

selves, were successively denied. A formal appeal to the Bible as the one ground of faith, coupled with an assertion of the right of every instructed man to examine the Bible for himself, threatened the very groundwork of the older dogmatism with ruin. Nor were these daring denials confined to the small circle of scholars who still clung to him. The "simple priests" were active in the diffusion of their master's doctrines, and how rapid their progress must have been we may see from the panic-struck exaggerations of their opponents. A few years later they complained that the followers of Wycliffe abounded everywhere and in all classes, among the baronage, in the cities, among the peasantry of the country-side, even in the monastic cell itself. "Every second man one meets is a Lollard."

381. "Lollard," a word which probably means "idle babbler," was the nickname of scorn with which the orthodox churchmen chose to insult their assailants. But this rapid increase changed their scorn into vigorous action. In 1382 Courtenay, who had now become archbishop, summoned a council at Blackfriars and formally submitted twenty-four propositions drawn from Wycliffe's works. An earthquake in the midst of the proceedings terrified every prelate but the resolute primate; the expulsion of ill humors from the earth, he said, was of good omen for the expulsion of ill humors from the church; and the condemnation was pronounced. Then the archbishop turned fiercely upon Oxford as the fount and center of the new heresies. In an English sermon at St. Frideswide's, Nicholas Herford had asserted the truth

of Wycliffe's doctrines, and Courtenay ordered the chancellor to silence him and his adherents on pain of being himself treated as a heretic. The chancellor fell back on the liberties of the university, and appointed as preacher another Wycliffite, Repyngdon, who did not hesitate to style the Lollards "holy priests," and to affirm that they were protected by John of Gaunt. Party spirit meanwhile ran high among the students. The bulk of them sided with the Lollard leaders, and a Carmelite, Peter Stokes, who had procured the archbishop's letters, cowered panic-stricken in his chamber, while the chancellor, protected by an escort of a hundred townsmen, listened approvingly to Repyngdon's defiance. "I dare go no further," wrote the poor friar to the archbishop, "for fear of death;" but he mustered courage at last to descend into the schools where Repyngdon was now maintaining that the clerical order was "better when it was but nine years old than now that it has grown to a thousand years and more." The appearance, however, of scholars in arms again drove Stokes to fly in despair to Lambeth, while a new heretic in open congregation maintained Wycliffe's denial of transubstantiation. "There is no idolatry," cried William James, "save in the sacrament of the altar." "You speak like a wise man," replied the chancellor, Robert Rygge. Courtenay, however, was not the man to bear defiance tamely, and his summons to Lambeth wrested a submission from Rygge which was only accepted on his pledge to suppress the Lollardism of the university. "I dare not publish them, on fear of death," exclaimed the chancellor when

Courtenay handed him his letters of condemnation. "Then is your university an open fautor of heretics," retorted the primate, "if it suffers not the Catholic truth to be proclaimed within its bounds." The royal council supported the archbishop's injunction, but the publication of the decrees at once set Oxford on fire. The scholars threatened death against the friars, "crying that they wished to destroy the university." The master suspended Henry Crump from teaching, as a troubler of the public peace, for calling the Lollards "heretics." The crown, however, at last stepped in to Courtenay's aid, and a royal writ ordered the instant banishment of all favorers of Wycliffe, with the seizure and destruction of all Lollard books on pain of forfeiture of the university's privileges. The threat produced its effect. Hereford and Repyngdon appealed in vain to John of Gaunt for protection; the duke himself denounced them as heretics against the sacrament of the altar, and after much evasion they were forced to make a formal submission. Within Oxford itself the suppression of Lollardism was complete, but with the death of religious freedom all trace of intellectual life suddenly disappears. The century which followed the triumph of Courtenay is the most barren in its annals, nor was the sleep of the university broken till the advent of the new learning restored to it some of the life and liberty which the primate had so roughly trodden out.

382. Nothing marks more strongly the grandeur of Wycliffe's position as the last of the great schoolmen than the reluctance of so bold a man as Courtenay,

even after his triumph over Oxford, to take extreme measures against the head of Lollardry. Wycliffe, though summoned, had made no appearance before the "Council of the Earthquake." "Pontius Pilate and Herod are made friends to-day," was his bitter comment on the new union which proved to have sprung up between the prelates and the monastic orders who had so long been at variance with each other; "since they have made a heretic of Christ, it is an easy inference for them to count simple Christians heretics." He seems, indeed, to have been sick at the moment, but the announcement of the final sentence roused him to life again. He petitioned the king and parliament that he might be allowed freely to prove the doctrines he had put forth, and turning with characteristic energy to the attack of his assailants, he asked that all religious vows might be suppressed, that tithes might be diverted to the maintenance of the poor and the clergy maintained by the free alms of their flocks, that the statutes of provisors and præmunire might be enforced against the papacy, that churchmen might be declared incapable of secular offices, and imprisonment for excommunication cease. Finally, in the teeth of the council's condemnation, he demanded that the doctrine of the eucharist, which he advocated, might be freely taught. If he appeared in the following year before the convocation at Oxford, it was to perplex his opponents by a display of scholastic logic, which permitted him to retire without any retraction of his sacramental heresy. For the time his opponents seemed satisfied with his expulsion from the university, but, in his

retirement at Lutterworth, he was forging during these troubled years the great weapon which, wielded by other hands than his own, was to produce so terrible an effect on the triumphant hierarchy. An earlier translation of the Scriptures, in part of which he was aided by his scholar Herford, was being revised and brought to the second form, which is better known as "Wycliffe's Bible," when death drew near. The appeal of the prelates to Rome was answered at last by a brief, ordering him to appear at the papal court. His failing strength exhausted itself in a sarcastic reply, which explained that his refusal to comply with the summons simply sprang from broken health. "I am always glad," ran the ironical answer, "to explain my faith to any one, and, above all, to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox, he will confirm it; if it be erroneous, he will correct it. I assume, too, that as chief vicar of Christ upon earth, the Bishop of Rome is, of all mortal men, most bound to the law of Christ's gospel, for among the disciples of Christ a majority is not reckoned by simply counting heads in the fashion of this world, but according to the imitation of Christ on either side. Now Christ, during his life upon earth, was of all men the poorest, casting from him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premises, as a simple counsel of my own, that the pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power, and advise his clergy to do the same." The boldness of his words sprang perhaps from a knowledge that his end was near. The terrible strain on energies enfeebled by age and study had at last

brought its inevitable result, and a stroke of paralysis, while Wycliffe was hearing mass in his parish church of Lutterworth, was followed on the next day by his death.

383. The persecution of Courtenay deprived the religious reform of its more learned adherents, and of the support of the universities. Wycliffe's death robbed it of its head at a moment when little had been done save a work of destruction. From that moment, Lollardism ceased to be in any sense an organized movement, and crumbled into a general spirit of revolt. All the religious and social discontent of the times floated instinctively to this new center. The socialist dreams of the peasantry, the new and keener spirit of personal morality, the hatred of the friars, the jealousy of the great lords toward the prelacy, the fanaticism of the reforming zealot, were blended together in a common hostility to the church, and a common resolve to substitute personal religion for its dogmatic and ecclesiastical system. But it was this want of organization, this looseness and fluidity of the new movement, that made it penetrate through every class of society. Women as well as men became the preachers of the new sect. Lollardry had its own schools, its own books; its pamphlets were passed everywhere from hand to hand; scurrilous ballads which revived the old attacks of "Goliath" in the Angevin times upon the wealth and luxury of the clergy were sung at every corner. Nobles like the Earl of Salisbury, and at a later time Sir John Oldcastle, placed themselves openly at the head of the cause, and threw open their gates as a

refuge for its missionaries. London, in its hatred of the clergy, became fiercely Lollard, and defended a Lollard preacher who ventured to advocate the new doctrines from the pulpit of St. Paul's. One of its mayors, John of Northampton, showed the influence of the new morality by the Puritan spirit in which he dealt with the morals of the city. Compelled to act, as he said, by the remissness of the clergy who connived for money at every kind of debauchery, he arrested the loose women, cut off their hair, and carted them through the streets as objects of public scorn. But the moral spirit of the new movement, though infinitely its grander side, was less dangerous to the church than its open repudiation of the older doctrines and systems of Christendom. Out of the floating mass of opinion which bore the name of Lollardry, one faith gradually evolved itself, a faith in the sole authority of the Bible as a source of religious truth. The translation of Wycliffe did its work. Scripture, complains a canon of Leicester, "became a vulgar thing, and more open to lay folk and women that knew how to read than it is wont to be to clerks themselves." Consequences which Wycliffe had perhaps shrunk from drawing were boldly drawn by his disciples. The church was declared to have become apostate, its priesthood was denounced as no priesthood, its sacraments as idolatry.

384. It was in vain that the clergy attempted to stifle the new movement by their old weapon of persecution. The jealousy entertained by the baronage and gentry of every pretension of the church to secular

power foiled its efforts to make persecution effective. At the moment of the peasant revolt, Courtenay procured the enactment of a statute which commissioned the sheriffs to seize all persons convicted before the bishops of preaching heresy. But the statute was repealed in the next session, and the commons added to the bitterness of the blow by their protest that they considered it "in nowise their interest to be more under the jurisdiction of the prelates or more bound by them than their ancestors had been in times past." Heresy, indeed, was still a felony by the common law, and if as yet we meet with no instances of the punishment of heretics by the fire, it was because the threat of such a death was commonly followed by the recantation of the Lollard. But the restriction of each bishop's jurisdiction within the limits of his own diocese made it impossible to arrest the wandering preachers of the new doctrine, and the civil punishment—even if it had been sanctioned by public opinion—seems to have long fallen into desuetude. Experience proved to the prelates that few sheriffs would arrest on the mere warrant of an ecclesiastical officer, and that no royal court would issue the writ "for the burning of a heretic" on a bishop's requisition. But powerless as the efforts of the church were for purposes of repression, they were effective in rousing the temper of the Lollards into a bitter fanaticism. The heretics delighted in outraging the religious sense of their day. One Lollard gentleman took home the sacramental wafer, and lunched on it with wine and oysters. Another flung some images of the saints

into his cellar. The Lollard preachers stirred up riots by the virulence of their preaching against the friars. But they directed even fiercer invectives against the wealth and secularity of the great churchmen. In a formal petition which was laid before parliament in 1395 they mingled denunciations of the riches of the clergy with an open profession of disbelief in transubstantiation, priesthood, pilgrimages, and image worship, and a demand, which illustrates the strange medley of opinions which jostled together in the new movement, that war might be declared unchristian, and that trades, such as those of the goldsmith or the armorer, which were contrary to apostolical poverty, might be banished from the realm. They contended (and it is remarkable that a parliament of the next reign adopted the statement) that from the superfluous revenues of the church, if once they were applied to purposes of general utility, the king might maintain 15 earls, 1500 knights, and 6000 squires, besides endowing 100 hospitals for the relief of the poor.

385. The distress of the landowners, the general disorganization of the country, in every part of which bands of marauders were openly defying the law, the panic of the church and of society at large as the projects of the Lollards shaped themselves into more daring and revolutionary forms, added a fresh keenness to the national discontent at the languid and inefficient prosecution of the war. The junction of the French and Spanish fleets had made them masters of the seas, and what fragments were left of Guienne lay at their mercy. The royal council

strove to detach the house of Luxemburg from the French alliance by winning for Richard the hand of Anne, a daughter of the late emperor, Charles the Fourth, who had fled at Crécy, and sister of King Wenzel, of Bohemia, who was now king of the Romans. But the marriage remained without political result, save that the Lollard books which were sent into their native country by the Bohemian servants of the new queen stirred the preaching of John Huss and the Hussite wars. Nor was English policy more successful in Flanders. Under Philip van Artevelde, the son of the leader of 1345, the Flemish towns again sought the friendship of England against France, but at the close of 1382 the towns were defeated, and their leader slain in the great French victory of Rosbecque. An expedition to Flanders in the following year under the warlike Bishop of Norwich turned out a mere plunder-raid and ended in utter failure. A short truce only gave France the leisure to prepare a counter-blow by the dispatch of a small but well-equipped force, under John de Vienne, to Scotland in 1385. Thirty thousand Scots joined in the advance of this force over the border; and though Northern England rose with a desperate effort and an English army penetrated as far as Edinburgh in the hope of bringing the foe to battle, it was forced to fall back without an encounter. Meanwhile France dealt a more terrible blow in the reduction of Ghent. The one remaining market for English commerce was thus closed up, while the forces which should have been employed in saving Ghent and in the protection of the English shores

against the threat of invasion were squandered by John of Gaunt in a war which he was carrying on along the Spanish frontier in pursuit of the visionary crown which he claimed in his wife's right. The enterprise showed that the duke had now abandoned the hope of directing affairs at home, and was seeking a new sphere of activity abroad. To drive him from the realm had been, from the close of the present revolt, the steady purpose of the councilors who now surrounded the young king, of his favorite Robert de Vere, and his chancellor, Michael de la Pole, who was raised in 1385 to the earldom of Suffolk. The duke's friends were expelled from office; John of Northampton, the head of his adherents among the commons, was thrown into prison; the duke himself was charged with treason and threatened with arrest. In 1386 John of Gaunt abandoned the struggle and sailed for Spain.

386. Richard himself took part in these measures against the duke. He was now twenty, handsome and golden-haired, with a temper capable of great actions and sudden bursts of energy, but indolent and unequal. The conception of kingship in which he had been reared made him regard the constitutional advance which had gone on during the war as an invasion of the rights of his crown. He looked on the nomination of the royal council and the great offices of state by the two houses, or the supervision of the royal expenditure by the commons, as infringements on the prerogative which only the pressure of the war and the weakness of a minority had forced the crown to bow to. The judgment of

his councilors was one with that of the king. Vere was no mere royal favorite; he was a great noble and of ancient lineage. Michael de la Pole was a man of large fortune and an old servant of the crown; he had taken part in the war for thirty years, and had been admiral and captain of Calais. But neither were men to counsel the young king wisely in his effort to obtain independence at once of parliament and of the great nobles. His first aim had been to break the pressure of the royal house itself, and in his encounter with John of Gaunt he had proved successful. But the departure of the Duke of Lancaster only called to the front his brother and his son. Thomas of Woodstock, the Duke of Gloucester, had inherited much of the lands and the influence of the old house of Bohun. Round Henry Earl of Derby, the son of John of Gaunt by Blanche of Lancaster, the old Lancastrian party of constitutional opposition was once more forming itself. The favor shown to the followers of Wycliffe at the court threw on the side of this new opposition the bulk of the bishops and churchmen. Richard himself showed no sympathy with the Lollards, but the action of her Bohemian servants shows the tendencies of his queen. Three members of the royal council were patrons of the Lollards, and the Earl of Salisbury, a favorite with the king, was their avowed head. The commons displayed no hostility to the Lollards, nor any zeal for the church; but the lukewarm prosecution of the war, the profuse expenditure of the court, and above all the manifest will of the king to free himself from

parliamentary control, estranged the lower house. Richard's haughty words told their own tale. When the parliament of 1385 called for an inquiry every year into the royal household, the king replied he would inquire when he pleased. When it prayed to know the names of the officers of state, he answered that he would change them at his will.

387. The burden of such answers and of the policy they revealed fell on the royal councilors, and the departure of John of Gaunt forced the new opposition into vigorous action. The parliament of 1386 called for the removal of Suffolk. Richard replied that he would not for such a prayer dismiss a turnspit of his kitchen. The Duke of Gloucester and Bishop Arundel of Ely were sent by the houses as their envoys, and warned the king that, should a ruler refuse to govern with the advice of his lords and by mad counsels work out his private purposes, it was lawful to depose him. The threat secured Suffolk's removal; he was impeached for corruption and maladministration, and condemned to forfeiture and imprisonment. It was only by submitting to the nomination of a Continual Council, with the Duke of Gloucester at its head, that Richard could obtain a grant of subsidies. But the houses were no sooner broken up than Suffolk was released, and in 1387 the young king rode through the country calling on the sheriffs to raise men against the barons, and bidding them suffer no knight of the shire to be returned for the next parliament "save one whom the king and his council chose." The general ill-will foiled both his efforts: and he was forced to

take refuge in an opinion of five of the judges that the Continual Council was unlawful, the sentence on Suffolk erroneous, and that the lords and commons had no power to remove a king's servant. Gloucester answered the challenge by taking up arms, and a general refusal to fight for the king forced Richard once more to yield. A terrible vengeance was taken on his supporters in the recent schemes. In the parliament of 1388 Gloucester, with the four Earls of Derby, Arundel, Warwick, and Nottingham, appealed on a charge of high treason Suffolk and De Vere, the Archbishop of York, the chief justice Tresilian, and Sir Nicholas Bramber. The first two fled, Suffolk to France, De Vere after a skirmish at Radcot Bridge to Ireland; but the archbishop was deprived of his see, Bramber beheaded, and Tresilian hanged. The five judges were banished, and Sir Simon Burley, with three other members of the royal household, sent to the block.

388. At the prayer of the "Wonderful Parliament," as some called this assembly, or as others with more justice "The Merciless Parliament," it was provided that all officers of state should henceforth be named in parliament or by the Continual Council. Gloucester remained at the head of the latter body, but his power lasted hardly a year. In May, 1389, Richard found himself strong enough to break down the government by a word. Entering the council he suddenly asked his uncle how old he was. "Your highness," answered Gloucester, "is in your twenty-second year!" "Then I am old enough to manage my own affairs," said Richard coolly; "I

have been longer under guardianship than any ward in my realm. I thank you for your past services, my lords, but I need them no more." The resolution was welcomed by the whole country; and Richard justified the country's hopes by wielding his new power with singular wisdom and success. He refused to recall De Vere or the five judges. The intercession of John of Gaunt on his return from Spain brought about a full reconciliation with the lords appellant. A truce was concluded with France, and its renewal year after year enabled the king to lighten the burden of taxation. Richard announced his purpose to govern by advice of parliament; he soon restored the lords appellant to his council, and committed the chief offices of state to great churchmen like Wykeham and Arundel. A series of statutes showed the activity of the houses. A statute of provisors which re-enacted those of Edward the Third was passed in 1390; the statute of *præmunire*, which punished the obtaining of bulls or other instruments from Rome with forfeiture, in 1393. The lords were bridled anew by a statute of maintenance, which forbade their violently supporting other men's causes in courts of justice or giving "livery" to a host of retainers. The statute of uses in 1391, which rendered illegal the devices which had been invented to frustrate that of mortmain, showed the same resolve to deal firmly with the church. A reform of the staple and other mercantile enactments proved the king's care for trade. Throughout the legislation of these eight years we see the same tone of coolness and moderation.

Eager as he was to win the good-will of the parliament and the church, Richard refused to bow to the panic of the landowners or to second the persecution of the priesthood. The demands of the parliament that education should be denied to the sons of villeins was refused. Lollardry as a social danger was held firmly at bay, and in 1387 the king ordered Lollard books to be seized and brought before the council. But the royal officers showed little zeal in aiding the bishops to seize or punish the heretical teachers.

389. It was in the period of peace which was won for the country by the wisdom and decision of its young king that England listened to the voice of her first great singer. The work of Chaucer marks the final settlement of the English tongue. The close of the great movement toward national unity which had been going on ever since the conquest was shown in the middle of the fourteenth century by the disuse, even among the nobler classes, of the French tongue. In spite of the efforts of the grammar schools and of the strength of fashion English won its way throughout the reign of Edward the Third to its final triumph in that of his grandson. It was ordered to be used in courts of law in 1362 "because the French tongue is much unknown," and in the following year it was employed by the chancellor in opening parliament. Bishops began to preach in English, and the English tracts of Wycliffe made it once more a literary tongue. We see the general advance in two passages from writers of Edward's and Richard's reigns. "Chil-

dren in school," says Higden, a writer of the first period, "against the usage and manner of all other nations, be compelled for to leave their own language and for to construe their lessons and their things in French, and so they have since the Normans first came into England. Also, gentlemen children be taught for to speak French from the time that they be rocked in their cradle, and know how to speak and play with a child's toy; and uplandish (or country) men will liken themselves to gentlemen, and strive with great busyness to speak French for to be more told of." "This manner," adds John of Trevisa, Higden's translator in Richard's time, "was much used before the first murrain (the black death of 1349), and is since somewhat changed. For John Cornwall, a master of grammar, changed the lore in grammar school and construing of French into English; and Richard Pencrych learned this manner of teaching of him, as other men did of Pencrych. So that now, the year of our Lord 1385, and of the second King Richard after the conquest nine, in all the grammar schools of England children leaveth French, and construeth and learneth in English. Also, gentlemen have now much left for to teach their children French."

390. This drift toward a general use of the national tongue told powerfully on literature. The influence of the French romances everywhere tended to make French the one literary language at the opening of the fourteenth century, and in England this influence had been backed by the French tone of the court of Henry the Third and the three Edwards.

But at the close of the reign of Edward the Third the long French romances needed to be translated even for knightly hearers. "Let clerks indite in Latin," says the author of the "Testament of Love," "and let Frenchmen in their French also indite their quaint terms, for it is kindly to their mouths; and let us show our fantasies in such wordes as we learned of our mother's tongue." But the new national life afforded nobler materials than "fantasies" now for English literature. With the completion of the work of national unity had come the completion of the work of national freedom. The vigor of English life showed itself in the wide extension of commerce, in the progress of the towns, and the upgrowth of a free yeomanry. It gave even nobler signs of its activity in the spirit of national independence and moral earnestness which awoke at the call of Wycliffe. New forces of thought and feeling which were destined to tell on every age of our later history broke their way through the crust of feudalism in the socialist revolt of the Lollards, and a sudden burst of military glory threw its glamour over the age of Crécy and Poitiers. It is this new gladness of a great people which utters itself in the verse of Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer was born about 1340, the son of a London vintner who lived in Thames street; and it was in London that the bulk of his life was spent. His family, though not noble, seems to have been of some importance, for from the opening of his career we find Chaucer in close connection with the court. At sixteen he was made page to the wife of Lionel of Clarence; at nineteen he first bore arms

in the campaign of 1359. But he was luckless enough to be made prisoner; and from the time of his release after the treaty of Bretigny he took no further share in the military enterprises of his time. He seems again to have returned to service about the court, and it was now that his first poems made their appearance, the "*Compleynte to Pity*" in 1368, and in 1369 the "*Death of Blanch the Duchesse*," the wife of John of Gaunt, who, from this time at least, may be looked upon as his patron. It may have been to John's influence that he owed his employment in seven diplomatic missions which were probably connected with the financial straits of the crown. Three of these, in 1372, 1374, and 1378, carried him to Italy. He visited Genoa and the brilliant court of the Visconti at Milan; at Florence, where the memory of Dante, the "great master" whom he commemorates so reverently in his verse, was still living, he may have met Boccaccio; at Padua, like his own clerk of Oxenford, he possibly caught the story of Griseldis from the lips of Petrarch.

391. It was these visits to Italy which gave us the Chaucer whom we know. From that hour his work stands out in vivid contrast with the poetic literature from the heart of which it sprang. The long French romances were the product of an age of wealth and ease, of indolent curiosity, of a fanciful and self-indulgent sentiment. Of the great passions which gave life to the Middle Ages, that of religious enthusiasm had degenerated into the conceits of Mariolatry, that of war into the extravagances of

chivalry. Love indeed remained; it was the one theme of troubadour and trouvreur; but it was a love of refinement, of romantic follies, of scholastic discussions, of sensuous enjoyment—a plaything rather than a passion. Nature had to reflect the pleasant indolence of man; the song of the minstrel moved through a perpetual May-time; the grass was ever green; the music of the lark and the nightingale rang out from field and thicket. There was a gay avoidance of all that is serious, moral, or reflective in man's life; life was too amusing to be serious, too piquant, too sentimental, too full of interest and gayety and chat. It was an age of talk: "mirth is none," says Chaucer's host, "to ride on by the way dumb as a stone;" and the trouvreur aimed simply at being the most agreeable talker of his day. His romances, his rhymes of Sir Tristram, his Romance of the Rose, are full of color and fantasy, endless in detail, but with a sort of gorgeous idleness about their very length, the minuteness of their description of outer things, the vagueness of their touch when it passes to the subtler inner world.

392. It was with this literature that Chaucer had till now been familiar, and it was this which he followed in his earlier work. But from the time of his visits to Milan and Genoa his sympathies drew him, not to the dying verse of France, but to the new and mighty upgrowth of poetry in Italy. Dante's eagle looks at him from the sun. "Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete," is to him one "whose rethorique sweete enluymned al Itail of poetrie." The "*Troilus*" which he produced about 1382 is an enlarged

English version of Boccaccio's "*Filostrato*;" the Knight's Tale, whose first draft is of the same period, bears slight traces of his *Teseide*. It was, indeed, the "*Decameron*" which suggested the very form of the "*Canterbury Tales*," the earliest of which, such as those of the Doctor, the Man of Law, the Clerk, the Prioress, the Franklin, and the Squire, may probably be referred, like the Parliament of Fowles and the House of Fame, to this time of Chaucer's life. But even while changing, as it were, the front of English poetry Chaucer preserves his own distinct personality. If he quizzes in the rhyme of Sir Thopaz the wearisome idleness of the French romance he retains all that was worth retaining of the French temper, its rapidity and agility of movement, its lightness and brilliancy of touch, its airy mockery, its gayety and good humor, its critical coolness and self-control. The French wit quickens in him more than in any English writer the sturdy sense and shrewdness of our national disposition, corrects its extravagance, and relieves its somewhat ponderous morality. If, on the other hand, he echoes the joyous carelessness of the Italian tale, he tempers it with the English seriousness. As he follows Boccaccio all his changes are on the side of purity; and when the *Troilus* of the Florentine ends with the old sneer at the changeableness of woman Chaucer bids us "*look Godward*," and dwells on the unchangeableness of heaven.

393. The genius of Chaucer, however, was neither French nor Italian, whatever element it might borrow from either literature, but English to the core;

and from the year 1384 all trace of foreign influence dies away. Chaucer had now reached the climax of his poetic power. He was a busy, practical worker, comptroller of the customs in 1374, of the petty customs in 1382, a member of the commons in the parliament of 1386. The fall of the Duke of Lancaster from power may have deprived him of employment for a time, but from 1389 to 1391 he was Clerk of the Royal Works, busy with repairs and building at Westminster, Windsor, and the Tower. His air, indeed, was that of a student rather than of a man of the world. A single portrait has preserved for us his forked beard, his dark-colored dress, the knife and pen-case at his girdle, and we may supplement this portrait by a few vivid touches of his own. The sly, elfish face, the quick walk, the plump figure and portly waist were those of a genial and humorous man; but men jested at his silence, his abstraction, his love of study. "Thou lookest as thou wouldst find an hare," laughs the host, "and ever on the ground I see thee stare." He heard little of his neighbors' talk when office work in Thames street was over. "Thou goest home to thy own house anon, and also dumb as a stone thou sittest at another book till fully dazed is thy look, and livest thus as an hermite, although," he adds slyly, "thy abstinence is lite," or little. But of this seeming abstraction from the world about him there is not a trace in Chaucer's verse. We see there how keen his observation was, how vivid and intense his sympathy with nature and the men among whom he moved. "Farewell, my book," he cried, as spring

came after winter and the lark's song roused him at dawn to spend hours gazing alone on the daisy whose beauty he sang. But field and stream and flower and bird, much as he loved them, were less to him than man. No poetry was ever more human than Chaucer's, none ever came more frankly and genially home to men than his "*Canterbury Tales*."

394. It was the continuation and revision of this work which mainly occupied him during the years from 1384 to 1390. Its best stories, those of the Miller, the Reeve, the Cook, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Friar, the Nun, the Priest, and the Pardoner, are ascribed to this period, as well as the prologue. The frame-work which Chaucer chose—that of a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury—not only enabled him to string these tales together, but lent itself admirably to the peculiar characteristics of his poetic temper, his dramatic versatility, and the universality of his sympathy. His tales cover the whole field of mediæval poetry; the legend of the priest, the knightly romance, the wonder-tale of the traveler, the broad humor of the fabliau, allegory and apologue, all are there. He finds a yet wider scope for his genius in the persons who tell these stories, the thirty pilgrims who start in the May morning from the Tabard in Southwark—thirty distinct figures, representatives of every class of English society, from the noble to the plowman. We see the "*verray perfight gentil knight*" in cassock and coat of mail, with his curly-headed squire beside him, fresh as the May morning, and behind them the brown-faced yeoman in his coat and hood

of green, with a mighty bow in his hand. A group of ecclesiastics light up for us the mediæval church—the brawny, hunt-loving monk, whose bridle jingles as loud and clear as the chapel-bell; the wanton friar, first among the beggars and harpers of the country side; the poor parson, threadbare, learned, and devout (“Christ’s lore and his apostles twelve he taught, and first he followed it himself”); the summoner, with his fiery face; the pardoner, with his wallet “bretfull of pardons, come from Rome all hot;” the lively prioress, with her courtly French lisp, her soft little red mouth, and “*Amor vincit omnia*” graven on her brooch. Learning is there in the portly person of the doctor of physic, rich with the profits of the pestilence—the busy sergeant-of-law, “that ever seemed busier than he was”—the hollow-cheeked clerk of Oxford, with his love of books and short, sharp sentences that disguise a latent tenderness which breaks out at last in the story of Griseldis. Around them crowd types of English industry: the merchant; the franklin in whose house “it snowed of meat and drink;” the sailor fresh from frays in the channel; the buxom wife of Bath; the broad-shouldered miller; the haberdasher, carpenter, weaver, dyer, tapestry-maker, each in the livery of his craft; and last the honest plowman, who would dike and delve for the poor without hire. It is the first time in English poetry that we are brought face to face, not with characters or allegories or reminiscences of the past, but with living and breathing men, men distinct in temper and sentiment as in face or costume or mode of

speech; and with this distinctness of each maintained throughout the story by a thousand shades of expression and action. It is the first time, too, that we meet with the dramatic power which not only creates each character, but combines it with its fellows, which not only adjusts each tale or jest to the temper of the person who utters it, but fuses all into a poetic unity. It is life in its largeness, its variety, its complexity, which surrounds us in the "*Canterbury Tales*." In some of the stories, indeed, which were composed, no doubt, at an earlier time, there is the tedium of the old romance or the pedantry of the schoolman; but taken as a whole the poem is the work, not of a man of letters, but of a man of action. Chaucer has received his training from war, courts, business, travel—a training, not of books, but of life. And it is life that he loves—the delicacy of its sentiment, the breadth of its farce, its laughter and its tears, the tenderness of its *Griseldis*, or the *Smollett*-like adventures of the miller and the clerks. It is this largeness of heart, this wide tolerance, which enables him to reflect man for us as none but Shakespeare has ever reflected him, and to do this with a pathos, a shrewd sense and kindly humor, a freshness and joyousness of feeling, that even Shakespeare has not surpassed.

395. The last ten years of Chaucer's life saw a few more tales added to the *Pilgrimage*, and a few poems to his work; but his power was lessening, and in 1400 he rested from his labors in his last home, a house in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel at Westminster. His body rests within the abbey church.

It was strange that such a voice should have awakened no echo in the singers that follow; but the first burst of English song died as suddenly in Chaucer as the hope and glory of his age. He died, indeed, at the moment of a revolution which was the prelude to years of national discord and national suffering. Whatever may have been the grounds of his action, the rule of Richard the Second, after his assumption of power, had shown his capacity for self-restraint. Parted by his own will from the counselors of his youth, calling to his service the lords appellant, reconciled alike with the baronage and the parliament, the young king promised to be among the noblest and wisest rulers that England had seen. But the violent and haughty temper which underlay this self-command showed itself from time to time. The Earl of Arundel and his brother, the bishop, stood in the front rank of the party which had coerced Richard in his early days; their influence was great in the new government. But a strife between the earl and John of Gaunt revived the king's resentment at the past action of this house; and at the funeral of Anne of Bohemia in 1394 a fancied slight roused Richard to a burst of passion. He struck the earl so violently that the blow drew blood. But the quarrel was patched up, and the reconciliation was followed by the elevation of Bishop Arundel to the vacant primacy in 1396. In the preceding year Richard had crossed to Ireland, and in a short autumn campaign reduced its native chiefs again to submission. Fears of Lollard disturbances soon recalled him, but these died at the king's presence, and

Richard was able to devote himself to the negotiation of a marriage which was to be the turning point of his reign. His policy throughout the recent years had been a policy of peace. It was war which rendered the crown helpless before the parliament, and peace was needful if the work of constant progress was not to be undone. But the short truces, renewed from time to time, which he had as yet secured, were insufficient for this purpose, for so long as war might break out in the coming year the king's hands were tied. The impossibility of renouncing the claim to the French crown, indeed, made a formal peace impossible, but its ends might be secured by a lengthened truce, and it was with a view to this that Richard in 1396 wedded Isabella, the daughter of Charles the Sixth of France. The bride was a mere child, but she brought with her a renewal of the truce for eight and twenty years.

396. The match was hardly concluded when the veil under which Richard had shrouded his real temper began to be dropped. His craving for absolute power, such as he witnessed in the court of France, was probably intensified from this moment by a mental disturbance which gathered strength as the months went on. As if to preclude any revival of the war Richard had surrendered Cherbourg to the King of Navarre, and now gave back Brest to the Duke of Brittany. He was said to have pledged himself at his wedding to restore Calais to the King of France. But once freed from all danger of such a struggle the whole character of his rule seemed to change. His court became as crowded and profuse

as his grandfather's. Money was recklessly borrowed and as recklessly squandered. The king's pride became insane, and it was fed with dreams of winning the imperial crown through the deposition of Wenzel of Bohemia. The councilors with whom he had acted since his resumption of authority saw themselves powerless. John of Gaunt, indeed, still retained influence over the king. It was the support of the Duke of Lancaster after his return from his Spanish campaign which had enabled Richard to hold in check the Duke of Gloucester and the party that he led; and the anxiety of the young king to retain this support was seen in his grant of Aquitaine to his uncle, and in the legitimization of the Beauforts, John's children by a mistress, Catherine Swinford, whom he married after the death of his second wife. The friendship of the duke brought with it the adhesion of one even more important, his son Henry, the Earl of Derby. As heir through his mother, Blanche of Lancaster, to the estates and influence of the Lancastrian house, Henry was the natural head of a constitutional opposition, and his weight was increased by a marriage with the heiress of the house of Bohun. He had taken a prominent part in the overthrow of Suffolk and De Vere, and on the king's resumption of power he had prudently withdrawn from the realm on a vow of crusade, had touched at Barbary, visited the holy sepulcher, and in 1390 sailed for Dantzic and taken part in a campaign against the heathen Prussians with the Teutonic knights. Since his return he had silently followed in his father's track. But the counsels of

John of Gaunt were hardly wiser than of old; Arundel had already denounced his influence as a hurtful one; and in the events which were now to hurry quickly on he seems to have gone hand in hand with the king.

397. A new uneasiness was seen in the parliament of 1397, and the commons prayed for a redress of the profusion of the court. Richard at once seized on the opportunity for a struggle. He declared himself grieved that his subjects should "take on themselves any ordinance or governance of the person of the king or his hostel or of any persons of estate whom he might be pleased to have in his company." The commons were at once overawed; they owned that the cognizance of such matters belonged wholly to the king, and gave up to the Duke of Lancaster the name of the member, Sir Thomas Haxey, who had brought forward this article of their prayer. The lords pronounced him a traitor, and his life was only saved by the fact that he was a clergyman, and by the interposition of Archbishop Arundel. The Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Gloucester at once withdrew from court. They stood almost alone, for of the royal house the Dukes of Lancaster and York with their sons, the Earls of Derby and Rutland, were now with the king, and the old coadjutor of Gloucester, the Earl of Nottingham, was in high favor with him. The Earl of Warwick alone joined them, and he was included in a charge of conspiracy which was followed by the arrest of the three. A fresh parliament in September was packed with royal partisans, and Richard moved boldly to his

end. The pardons of the lords appellant were revoked. Archbishop Arundel was impeached and banished from the realm; he was transferred by the pope to the see of St. Andrew's, and the primacy given to Roger Walden. The Earl of Arundel, accused before the peers, under John of Gaunt as high steward, was condemned and executed in a single day. Warwick, who owned the truth of the charge, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The Duke of Gloucester was saved from a trial by a sudden death in his prison at Calais. A new parliament at Shrewsbury in the opening of 1398 completed the king's work. In three days it declared null the proceedings of the parliament of 1388, granted to the king a subsidy on wool and leather for his life, and delegated its authority to a standing committee of eighteen members from both houses, with power to continue their sittings even after the dissolution of the parliament, and to "examine and determine all matters and subjects which had been moved in the presence of the king, with all the dependencies thereof."

398. In a single year the whole color of Richard's government had changed. He had revenged himself on the men who had once held him down, and his revenge was hardly taken before he disclosed a plan of absolute government. He had used the parliament to strike down the primate, as well as the greatest nobles of the realm, and to give him a revenue for life which enabled him to get rid of parliament itself, for the permanent committee which it named were men devoted, as Richard held, to his cause.

John of Gaunt was at its head, and the rest of its lords were those who had backed the king in his blow at Gloucester and the Arundels. Two, however, were excluded. In the general distribution of rewards which followed Gloucester's overthrow, the Earl of Derby had been made Duke of Hereford, the Earl of Nottingham Duke of Norfolk. But at the close of 1397 the two dukes charged each other with treasonable talk as they rode between Brentford and London, and the permanent committee ordered the matter to be settled by a single combat. In September, 1398, the dukes entered the lists; but Richard forbade the duel, sentenced the Duke of Norfolk to banishment for life, and Henry of Lancaster to exile for six years. As Henry left London, the streets were crowded with people weeping for his fate; some followed him even to the coast. But his withdrawal removed the last check on Richard's despotism. He forced from every tenant of the crown an oath to recognize the acts of his committee as valid, and to oppose any attempts to alter or revoke them. Forced loans, the sale of charters of pardon to Gloucester's adherents, the outlawry of seven counties at once on the plea that they had supported his enemies and must purchase pardon, a reckless interference with the course of justice, roused into new life the old discontent. Even this might have been defied had not Richard set an able and unscrupulous leader at its head. Leave had been given to Henry of Lancaster to receive his father's inheritance on the death of John of Gaunt, in February, 1399. But an ordinance of the continual committee annulled this per-

mission, and Richard seized the Lancastrian estates. Archbishop Arundel at once saw the chance of dealing blow for blow. He hastened to Paris and pressed the duke to return to England, telling him how all men there looked for it, "especially the Londoners, who loved him a hundred times more than they did the king." For a while Henry remained buried in thought, "leaning on a window overlooking a garden;" but Arundel's pressure at last prevailed, he made his way secretly to Brittany, and with fifteen knights set sail from Vannes.

399. What had really decided him was the opportunity offered by Richard's absence from the realm. From the opening of his reign, the king's attention had been constantly drawn to his dependent lordship of Ireland. More than two hundred years had passed away since the troubles which followed the murder of Archbishop Thomas forced Henry the Second to leave his work of conquest unfinished, and the opportunity for a complete reduction of the island which had been lost then had never returned. When Henry quitted Ireland, indeed, Leinster was wholly in English hands, Connaught bowed to a nominal acknowledgment of the English overlordship, and for a while the work of conquest seemed to go steadily on. John de Courcy penetrated into Ulster, and established himself at Downpatrick; and Henry planned the establishment of his youngest son, John, as lord of Ireland. But the levity of the young prince, who mocked the rude dresses of the native chieftains and plucked them in insult by the beard, soon forced his father to recall him; and in the con-

tinental struggle which soon opened on the Angevin kings, as in the constitutional struggle within England itself which followed it, all serious purpose of completing the conquest of Ireland was forgotten. Nothing, indeed, but the feuds and weakness of the Irish tribes enabled the adventurers to hold the districts of Drogheda, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork, which formed what was thenceforth known as "the English pale." In all the history of Ireland, no event has proved more disastrous than this half-finished conquest. Had the Irish driven their invaders into the sea, or the English succeeded in the complete reduction of the island, the misery of its after-ages might have been avoided. A struggle such as that in which Scotland drove out its conquerors might have produced a spirit of patriotism and national union which would have formed a people out of the mass of warring clans. A conquest such as that in which the Normans made England their own would have spread at any rate the law, the order, the civilization of the conquering country over the length and breadth of the conquered. Unhappily Ireland, while powerless to effect its entire deliverance, was strong enough to hold its assailants partially at bay. The country was broken into two halves whose conflict has never ceased. So far from either giving elements of civilization or good government to the other, conqueror and conquered reaped only degradation from the ceaseless conflict. The native tribes lost whatever tendency to union or social progress had survived the invasion of the Danes. Their barbarism was intensified by their

hatred of the more civilized intruders. But these intruders themselves penned within the narrow limits of the pale, brutalized by a merciless conflict, cut off from contact with the refining influences of a larger world, sank rapidly to the level of the barbarism about them: and the lawlessness, the ferocity, the narrowness of feudalism broke out unchecked in this horde of adventurers, who held the land by their sword.

400. From the first the story of the English pale was a story of degradation and anarchy. It needed the stern vengeance of John, whose army stormed its strongholds and drove its leading barons into exile, to preserve even their fealty to the English crown. John divided the pale into counties, and ordered the observance of the English law; but the departure of his army was the signal for a return of the disorder he had trampled under foot. Between Englishmen and Irishmen went on a ceaseless and pitiless war. Every Irishman without the pale was counted by the English settlers an enemy and a robber whose murder found no cognizance or punishment at the hands of the law. Half the subsistence of the English barons was drawn from forays across the border, and these forays were avenged by incursions of native marauders, which carried havoc at times to the very walls of Dublin. Within the pale itself the misery was hardly less. The English settlers were harried and oppressed by their own baronage as much as by the Irish marauders, while the feuds of the English lords wasted their strength and prevented any effective combination either for common

conquest or common defense. So utter seemed their weakness that Robert Bruce saw in it an opportunity for a counter blow at his English assailants, and his victory at Bannockburn was followed up by the dispatch of a Scotch force to Ireland with his brother Edward at its head. A general rising of the Irish welcomed this deliverer; but the danger drove the barons of the pale to a momentary union, and in 1316 their valor was proved on the bloody field of Athenree by the slaughter of 11,000 of their foes and the almost complete annihilation of the sept of the O'Connors. But with victory returned the old anarchy and degradation. The barons of the pale sank more and more into Irish chieftains. The Fitz-Maurices who became Earls of Desmond, and whose vast territory in Munster was erected into a county palatine, adopted the dress and manners of the natives around them. The rapid growth of this evil was seen in the ruthless provisions by which Edward the Third strove to check it in his statute of Kilkenny. The statute forbade the adoption of the Irish language or name or dress by any man of English blood: it enforced within the pale the exclusive use of English law, and made the use of the native or Brehon law, which was gaining ground, an act of treason; it made treasonable any marriage of the Englishry with persons of Irish race, or any adoption of English children by Irish foster-fathers.

401. But stern as they were these provisions proved fruitless to check the fusion of the two races, while the growing independence of the lords of the pale threw off all but the semblance of obedience to the

English government. It was this which stirred Richard to a serious effort for the conquest and organization of the island. In 1386 he granted the "entire dominion" of Ireland, with the title of its duke, to Robert de Vere on condition of his carrying out its utter reduction. But the troubles of the reign soon recalled De Vere, and it was not till the truce with France had freed his hands that the king again took up his projects of conquest. In 1394 he landed with an army at Waterford, and received the general submission of the native chieftains. But the lords of the pale held sullenly aloof; and Richard had no sooner quitted the island than the Irish in turn refused to carry out their promise of quitting Leinster, and engaged in a fresh contest with the Earl of March, whom the king had proclaimed as his heir and left behind him as his lieutenant in Ireland. In the summer of 1398 March was beaten and slain in battle, and Richard resolved to avenge his cousin's death and complete the work he had begun by a fresh invasion. He felt no apprehension of danger. At home his triumph seemed complete. The death of Norfolk, the exile of Henry of Lancaster, left the baronage without heads for any rising. He insured, as he believed, the loyalty of the great houses by the hostages of their blood whom he carried with him, at whose head was Henry of Lancaster's son, the future Henry the Fifth. The refusal of the Percies, the Earl of Northumberland and his son Henry Percy or Hotspur, to obey his summons might have warned him that danger was brewing in the north. Richard however took little heed. He banished the

Percies, who withdrew into Scotland; and sailed for Ireland at the end of May, leaving his uncle, the Duke of York, regent in his stead.

402. The opening of his campaign was indecisive, and it was not till fresh reinforcements arrived at Dublin that the king could prepare for a march into the heart of the island. But while he planned the conquest of Ireland the news came that England was lost. Little more than a month had passed after his departure when Henry of Lancaster entered the Humber and landed at Ravenspur. He came, he said, to claim his heritage; and three of his Yorkshire castles at once threw open their gates. The two great houses of the north joined him at once. Ralph Neville, the Earl of Westmoreland, had married his half-sister; the Percies came from their exile over the Scottish border. As he pushed quickly to the south all resistance broke down. The army which the regent gathered refused to do hurt to the duke; London called him to her gates; and the royal council could only march hastily on Bristol in the hope of securing that port for the king's return. But the town at once yielded to Henry's summons, the regent submitted to him, and with an army which grew at every step the duke marched upon Cheshire, where Richard's adherents were gathering in arms to meet the king. Contrary winds had for a while kept Richard ignorant of his cousin's progress, and even when the news reached him he was in a web of treachery. The Duke of Albemarle, the son of the regent Duke of York, was beside him, and at his persuasion the king abandoned his first purpose of

returning at once, and sent the Earl of Salisbury to Conway while he himself waited to gather his army and fleet. The six days he proposed to gather them in became sixteen, and the delay proved fatal to his cause. As no news came of Richard the Welshmen who flocked to Salisbury's camp dispersed on Henry's advance to Chester. Henry was, in fact, master of the realm at the opening of August when Richard at last sailed from Waterford and landed at Milford Haven.

403. Every road was blocked, and the news that all was lost told on the 30,000 men he brought with him. In a single day but 6000 remained, and even these dispersed when it was found that the king had ridden off disguised as a friar to join the force which he believed to be awaiting him in North Wales with Salisbury at its head. He reached Caernarvon only to find this force already disbanded, and throwing himself into the castle dispatched his kinsmen, the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey, to Chester to negotiate with Henry of Lancaster. But they were detained there while the Earl of Northumberland pushed forward with a picked body of men, and securing the castles of the coast at last sought an interview with Richard at Conway. The king's confidence was still unbroken. He threatened to raise a force of Welshmen and to put Lancaster to death. Deserted as he was indeed, a king was in himself a power and only the treacherous pledges of the earl induced him to set aside his plans for a reconciliation to be brought about in parliament and to move from Conway on the promise of a conference with Henry at Flint.

But he had no sooner reached the town than he found himself surrounded by Lancaster's forces. "I am betrayed," he cried, as the view of his enemies burst on him from the hill; "there are pennons and banners in the valley." But it was too late for retreat. Richard was seized and brought before his cousin. "I am come before my time," said Lancaster, "but I will show you the reason. Your people, my lord, complain that for the space of twenty years you have ruled them harshly: however, if it please God, I will help you to rule them better." "Fair cousin," replied the king, "since it pleases you, it pleases me well." Then, breaking in private into passionate regrets that he had ever spared his cousin's life, he suffered himself to be carried a prisoner along the road to London.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER.

1399-1422.

404. ONCE safe in the Tower, it was easy to wring from Richard a resignation of his crown; and this resignation was solemnly accepted by the parliament which met at the close of September, 1399. But the resignation was confirmed by a solemn act of deposition. The coronation oath was read, and a long impeachment which stated the breach of the promises made in it was followed by a solemn vote of both houses which removed Richard from the

state and authority of king. According to the strict rules of hereditary descent as construed by the feudal lawyers by an assumed analogy with the rules which governed descent of ordinary estates, the crown would now have passed to a house which had at an earlier period played a leading part in the revolutions of the Edwards. The great grandson of the Mortimer who brought about the deposition of Edward the Second had married the daughter and heiress of Lionel of Clarence, the third son of Edward the Third. The childlessness of Richard and the death of Edward's second son without issue placed Edmund Mortimer, the son of the earl who had fallen in Ireland, first among the claimants of the crown; but he was now a child of six years old, the strict rule of hereditary descent had never received any formal recognition in the case of the crown, and precedent suggested a right of parliament to choose in such a case a successor among any other members of the royal house. Only one such successor was, in fact, possible. Rising from his seat and crossing himself, Henry of Lancaster solemnly challenged the crown, "as that I am descended by right line of blood coming from the good lord King Henry the Third, and through that right that God of his grace hath sent me with help of my kin and of my friends to recover it: the which realm was in point to be undone by default of governance and undoing of good laws." Whatever defects such a claim might present were more than covered by the solemn recognition of parliament. The two archbishops, taking the new sovereign by the hand,

seated him upon the throne, and Henry in emphatic words ratified the compact between himself and his people. "Sirs," he said to the prelates, lords, knights, and burgesses gathered round him, "I thank God and you, spiritual and temporal, and all estates of the land; and do you to wit it is not my will that any man think that by way of conquest I would disinherit any of his heritage, franchises, or other rights that he ought to have, nor put him out of the good that he has and has had by the good laws and customs of the realm, except those persons that have been against the good purpose and the common profit of the realm."

405. The deposition of a king, the setting aside of one claimant and the elevation of another to the throne, marked the triumph of the English parliament over the monarchy. The struggle of the Edwards against its gradual advance had culminated in the bold effort of Richard the Second to supersede it by a commission dependent on the crown. But the house of Lancaster was precluded by its very position from any renewal of the struggle. It was not merely that the exhaustion of the treasury by the war and revolt which followed Henry's accession left him, even more than the kings who had gone before, in the hands of the estates; it was that his very right to the crown lay in an acknowledgment of their highest pretensions. He had been raised to the throne by a parliamentary revolution. His claim to obedience had throughout to rest on a parliamentary title. During no period of our early history, therefore, were the powers of the two houses

so frankly recognized. The tone of Henry the Fourth till the very close of his reign is that of humble compliance, in all but ecclesiastical matters, with the prayers of the parliament, and even his imperious successor shrank almost with timidity from any conflict with it. But the crown had been bought by pledges less noble than this. Arundel was not only the representative of constitutional rule; he was also the representative of religious persecution. No prelate had been so bitter a foe of the Lollards, and the support which the church had given to the recent revolution had no doubt sprung from its belief that a sovereign whom Arundel placed on the throne would deal pitilessly with the growing heresy. The expectations of the clergy were soon realized. In the first convocation of his reign Henry declared himself the protector of the church, and ordered the prelates to take measures for the suppression of heresy and of the wandering preachers. His declaration was but a prelude to the statute of heresy which was passed at the opening of 1401. By the provisions of this infamous act, the hindrances which had till now neutralized the efforts of the bishops to enforce the common law were utterly taken away. Not only were they permitted to arrest all preachers of heresy, all schoolmasters infected with heretical teaching, all owners and writers of heretical books, and to imprison them even if they recanted at the king's pleasure, but a refusal to abjure or a relapse after abjuration enabled them to hand over the heretic to the civil officers, and by these—so ran the first legal enactment of religious bloodshed which

defied our statute-book—he was to be burned on a high place before the people. The statute was hardly passed when William Sautre became its first victim. Sautre, while a parish priest at Lynn, had been cited before the Bishop of Norwich two years before for heresy and forced to recant. But he still continued to preach against the worship of images, against pilgrimages, and against transubstantiation till the statute of heresy strengthened Arundel's hands. In February, 1401, Sautre was brought before the primate as a relapsed heretic, and on refusing to recant a second time was degraded from his orders. He was handed to the secular power, and on the issue of a royal writ publicly burned.

406. The support of the nobles had been partly won by a hope hardly less fatal to the peace of the realm, the hope of a renewal of the strife with France. The peace of Richard's later years had sprung not merely from the policy of the English king, but from the madness of Charles the Sixth of France. France fell into the hands of its king's uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, and as the duke was ruler of Flanders and peace with England was a necessity for Flemish industry, his policy went hand in hand with that of Richard. His rival, the king's brother, Lewis Duke of Orleans, was the head of the French war-party; and it was with the view of bringing about war that he supported Henry of Lancaster in his exile at the French court. Burgundy, on the other hand, listened to Richard's denunciation of Henry as a traitor, and strove to prevent his departure. But his efforts were in vain, and he had to

witness a revolution which hurled Richard from the throne, deprived Isabella of her crown, and restored to power the baronial party of which Gloucester, the advocate of war, had long been the head. The dread of war was increased by a pledge which Henry was said to have given at his coronation that he would not only head an army in its march into France, but that he would march further into France than ever his grandfather had done. The French court retorted by refusing to acknowledge Henry as king, while the truce concluded with Richard came at his death legally to an end. In spite of this defiance, however, Burgundy remained true to the interests of Flanders, and Henry clung to a truce which gave him time to establish his throne. But the influence of the baronial party in England made peace hard to keep; the Duke of Orleans urged on France to war; and the hatred of the two peoples broke through the policy of the two governments. Count Waleran of St. Pol, who had married Richard's half-sister, put out to sea with a fleet which swept the east coast and entered the channel. Pirates from Brittany and Navarre soon swarmed in the narrow seas, and their ravages were paid back by those of pirates from the Cinque ports. A more formidable trouble broke out in the north. The enmity of France roused as of old the enmity of Scotland: the Scotch king Robert the Third refused to acknowledge Henry, and Scotch freebooters cruised along the northern coast.

407. Attack from without woke attack from within the realm. Henry had shown little taste for bloodshed in his conduct of the revolution. Save

those of the royal councilors whom he found at Bristol no one had been put to death. Though a deputation of lords with Archbishop Arundel at its head pressed him to take Richard's life, he steadily refused, and kept him a prisoner at Pomfret. The judgments against Gloucester, Warwick, and Arundel were reversed, but the lords who had appealed the duke were only punished by the loss of the dignities which they had received as their reward. Richard's brother and nephew by the half-blood, the Dukes of Surrey and Exeter, became again Earls of Kent and Huntingdon. York's son, the Duke of Albemarle, sank once more into Earl of Rutland. Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, lost his new marquisate of Dorset; Spenser lost his earldom of Gloucester. But, in spite of a stormy scene among the lords in parliament, Henry refused to exact further punishment; and his real temper was seen in a statute which forbade all such appeals and left treason to be dealt with by ordinary process of law. But the times were too rough for mercy such as this. Clouds no sooner gathered round the new king than the degraded lords leagued with the Earl of Salisbury and the deposed Bishop of Carlisle to release Richard and to murder Henry. Betrayed by Rutland in the spring of 1401, and threatened by the king's march from London, they fled to Cirencester; but the town was against them, its burghers killed Kent and Salisbury, and drove out the rest. A terrible retribution followed. Lord Spenser and the Earl of Huntingdon were taken and summarily beheaded; thirty more conspirators fell into the king's

hands to meet the same fate. They drew with them in their doom the wretched prisoner in whose name they had risen. A great council held after the suppression of the revolt prayed "that if Richard, the late king, be alive, as some suppose he is, it be ordained that he be well and securely guarded for the safety of the states of the king and kingdom; but if he be dead, then that he be openly showed to the people that they may have knowledge thereof." The ominous words were soon followed by news of Richard's death in prison. His body was brought to St. Paul's, Henry himself with the princes of the blood royal bearing the pall; and the face was left uncovered to meet rumors that the prisoner had been assassinated by his keeper, Sir Piers Exton.

408. In June Henry marched northward to end the trouble from the Scots. With their usual policy the Scottish army, under the Duke of Albany, withdrew as the English crossed the border, and looked coolly on while Henry invested the castle of Edinburgh. The wants of his army forced him in fact to raise the siege; but even success would have been fruitless, for he was recalled by trouble nearer home. Wales was in full revolt. The country had been devoted to Richard; and so notorious was its disaffection to the new line that, when Henry's son knelt at his father's feet to receive a grant of the principality, a shrewd bystander murmured, "he must conquer it if he will have it." The death of the fallen king only added to the Welsh disquiet, for, in spite of the public exhibition of his body, he was believed to be still alive. Some held that he had escaped to Scot-

land, and an impostor who took his name was long maintained at the Scottish court. In Wales it was believed that he was still a prisoner in Chester castle. But the trouble would have died away had it not been raised into revolt by the energy of Owen Glyn-dwr or Glendower. Owen was a descendant of one of the last native princes, Llewellyn-ap-Jorwerth, and the lord of considerable estates in Merioneth. He had been squire of the body to Richard the Second, and had clung to him till he was seized at Flint. It was probably his known aversion from the revolution which had deposed his master that brought on him the hostility of Lord Grey of Ruthin, the stay of the Lancastrian cause in North Wales; and the same political ground may have existed for the refusal of the parliament to listen to his prayer for redress and for the restoration of the lands which Grey had seized. But the refusal was embittered by words of insult; when the Bishop of St. Asaph warned them of Owen's power the lords retorted that "they cared not for barefoot knaves." They were soon to be made to care. At the close of 1400 Owen rose in revolt, burned the town of Ruthin, and took the title of Prince of Wales.

409. His action at once changed the disaffection into a national revolt. His raids on the marches and his capture of Radnor marked its importance, and Henry marched against him in the summer of 1401. But Glendower's post at Corwen defied attack, and the pressure in the north forced the king to march away into Scotland. Henry Percy, who held the castles of North Wales as constable, was left to sup-

press the rebellion, but Owen met Percy's arrival by the capture of Conway and the king was forced to hurry fresh forces under his son Henry to the west. The boy was too young as yet to show the military and political ability which was to find its first field in these Welsh campaigns, and his presence did little to stay the growth of revolt. While Owen's lands were being harried Owen was stirring the people of Caermarthen into rebellion and pressing the siege of Abergavenny; nor could the presence of English troops save Shropshire from pillage. Everywhere the Welshmen rose for their "prince;" the bards declared his victories to have been foretold by Merlin; even the Welsh scholars at Oxford left the university in a body and joined his standard. The castles of Ruthin, Hawarden, and Flint fell into his hands, and with his capture of Conway gave him command of North Wales. The arrival of help from Scotland and the hope of help from France gave fresh vigor to Owen's action, and, though Percy held his ground stubbornly on the coast and even recovered Conway, he at last threw up his command in disgust. A fresh inroad of Henry on his return from Scotland again failed to bring Owen to battle, and the negotiations which he carried on during the following winter were a mere blind to cover preparations for a new attack. So strong had Glendower become in 1402 that in June he was able to face an English army in the open field at Brynglas and to defeat it with a loss of a thousand men. The king again marched to the border to revenge this blow. But the storms which met him as he entered the

hills, storms which his archers ascribed to the magic powers of Owen, ruined his army, and he was forced to withdraw as of old. A raid over the northern border distracted the English forces. A Scottish army entered England with the impostor who bore Richard's name, and though it was utterly defeated by Henry Percy in September at Homildon Hill the respite had served Owen well. He sallied out from the inaccessible fastnesses in which he had held Henry at bay to win victories which were followed by the adhesion of all North Wales and of great part of South Wales to his cause.

410. What gave life to these attacks and conspiracies was the hostility of France. The influence of the Duke of Burgundy was still strong enough to prevent any formal hostilities, but the war party was gaining more and more the ascendant. Its head, the Duke of Orleans, had fanned the growing flame by sending a formal defiance to Henry the Fourth as the murderer of Richard. French knights were among the prisoners whom the Percies took at Homildon Hill; and it may have been through their intervention that the Percies themselves were now brought into correspondence with the court of France. No house had played a greater part in the overthrow of Richard, or had been more richly rewarded by the new king. But old grudges existed between the house of Percy and the house of Lancaster. The Earl of Northumberland had been at bitter variance with John of Gaunt; and though a common dread of Richard's enmity had thrown the Percies and Henry together, the new king and his

powerful subjects were soon parted again. Henry had ground indeed for distrust. The death of Richard left the young Mortimer Earl of March, next claimant in blood of the crown, and the king had shown his sense of this danger by imprisoning the earl and his sisters in the Tower. But this imprisonment made their uncle, Sir Edmund Mortimer, the representative of their house; and Edmund withdrew to the Welsh marshes, refusing to own Henry for king. The danger was averted by the luck which threw Sir Edmund as a captive into the hands of Owen Glendower in the battle of Brynglas. It was natural that Henry should refuse to allow Mortimer's kinsmen to ransom so formidable an enemy; but among these kinsmen Henry Percy ranked himself through his marriage with Sir Edmund's sister, and the refusal served as a pretext for a final breach with the king.

411. Percy had withdrawn from the Welsh war in wrath at the inadequate support which Henry gave him; and his anger had been increased by a delay in repayment of the sums spent by his house in the contest with Scotland, as well as by the king's demand that he should surrender the Earl of Douglas, whom he had taken prisoner at Homildon Hill. He now became the center of a great conspiracy to place the Earl of March upon the throne. His father, the Earl of Northumberland, his uncle, Thomas Percy, the Earl of Worcester, joined in the plot. Sir Edmund Mortimer negotiated for aid from Owen Glendower; the Earl of Douglas threw in his fortunes with the confederates; and Henry Percy himself

crossed to France and obtained promises of support. The war party had now gained the upper hand at the French court; in 1403 preparations were made to attack Calais, and a Breton fleet put to sea. At the news of its presence in the channel Henry Percy and the Earl of Worcester at once rose in the north and struck across England to join Owen Glendower in Wales, while the Earl of Northumberland gathered a second army and advanced more slowly to their support. But Glendower was still busy with the siege of Caermarthen, and the king by a hasty march flung himself across the road of the Percies as they reached Shrewsbury. On the 23d of July a fierce fight ended in the defeat of the rebel force. Henry Percy was slain in battle, the Earl of Worcester taken and beheaded; while Northumberland, who had been delayed by an army under his rival in the north, Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, was thrown into prison, and only pardoned on his protestations of innocence. The quick, hard blow did its work. The young Earl of March betrayed the plans of his partisans to purchase pardon. The Breton fleet, which had defeated an English fleet in the channel and made a descent upon Plymouth, withdrew to its harbors; and though the Duke of Burgundy was on the point of commencing the siege of Calais, the plans of an attack on that town were no more heard of.

412. But the difficulty of Wales remained as great as ever. The discouragement of Owen at the failure of the conspiracy of the Percies was removed by the open aid of the French court. In July, 1404,

the French king, in a formal treaty, owned Glendower as Prince of Wales, and his promises of aid gave fresh heart to the insurgents. What hampered Henry's efforts most in meeting this danger was the want of money. At the opening of 1404 the parliament grudgingly gave a subsidy of a twentieth, but the treasury called for fresh supplies in October, and the wearied commons fell back on their old proposal of a confiscation of church property. Under the influence of Archbishop Arundel the lords succeeded in quashing the project, and a new subsidy was voted; but the treasury was soon as empty as before. Treason was still rife; the Duke of York, who had played so conspicuous a part in Richard's day as Earl of Rutland, was sent for a while to the Tower on suspicion of complicity in an attempt of his sister to release the Earl of March; and Glendower remained unconquerable.

413. But fortune was now beginning to turn. The danger from Scotland was suddenly removed. King Robert resolved to send his son James for training to the court of France, but the boy was driven to the English coast by a storm, and Henry refused to release him. Had the Scots been friends, the king jested, they would have sent James to him for education, as he knew the French tongue quite as well as King Charles. Robert died of grief at the news; and Scotland fell into the hands of his brother, the Duke of Albany, whose one aim was that his nephew should remain a prisoner. James grew up at the English court; and, prisoner though he was, the excellence of his training was seen in the poetry and

intelligence of his later life. But with its king as a hostage Scotland was no longer to be dreaded as a foe. France, too, was weakened at this moment; for in 1405 a long-smouldering jealousy between the Dukes of Orleans and of Burgundy broke out at last into open strife. The break did little indeed to check the desultory hostilities which were going on. A Breton fleet made descents on Portland and Dartmouth. The Count of Armagnac, the strongest supporter of Orleans and the war party, led troops against the frontier of Guienne. But the weakness of France and the exhaustion of its treasury prevented any formal denunciation of the truce or declaration of war. Though Henry could spare not a soldier for Guienne, Armagnac did little hurt. An English fleet repaid the ravages of the Bretons by harrying the coast of Brittany; and the turn of French politics soon gave Frenchmen too much work at home to spare men for work abroad. At the close of 1407 the murder of the Duke of Orleans by the order of the Duke of Burgundy changed the weak and fitful strife which had been going on into a struggle of the bitterest hate. The Count of Armagnac placed himself at the head of the murdered duke's partisans; and in their furious antagonism Armagnac and Burgundian alike sought aid from the English king.

414. But the fortune which favored Henry elsewhere was still slow to turn in the west. In the opening of 1405 the king's son, Henry Prince of Wales, had taken the field against Glendower. Young as he was, Henry was already a tried soldier. As a boy of **thirteen** he had headed an incursion into Scotland in

the year of his father's accession to the throne. At fifteen he fought in the front of the royal army in the desperate fight at Shrewsbury. Slight and tall in stature as he seemed, he had outgrown the weakness of his earlier years, and was vigorous and swift of foot; his manners were courteous, his air grave and reserved; and though wild tales ran of revels and riots among his friends, the poets whom he favored, and Lydgate, whom he set to translate "the dreary piteous tale of him of Troy," saw in him a youth "both manful and vertuous." There was little time indeed for mere riot in a life so busy as Henry's, nor were many opportunities for self-indulgence to be found in campaigns against Glendower. What fitted the young general of seventeen for the thankless work in Wales was his stern, immovable will. But fortune as yet had few smiles for the king in this quarter, and his constant ill-success continued to wake fresh troubles within England itself. The repulse of the young prince in a spring campaign in 1405 was at once followed by a revolt in the north. The pardon of Northumberland had left him still a foe; the Earl of Nottingham was son of Henry's opponent, the banished Duke of Norfolk; Scrope, Archbishop of York, was brother of Richard's councilor, the Earl of Wiltshire, who had been beheaded on the surrender of Bristol. Their rising in May might have proved a serious danger had not the treachery of Ralph Neville, the Earl of Westmoreland, who still remained steady to the Lancastrian cause, secured the arrest of some of its leaders. Scrope and Lord Nottingham were beheaded, while Northumberland

and his partisan, Lord Bardolf, fled into Scotland and from thence to Wales. Succors from France stirred the king to a renewed attack on Glendower in November, but with the same ill-success. Storms and want of food wrecked the English army and forced it to retreat; a year of rest raised Glendower to new strength; and when the long-promised body of 8000 Frenchmen joined him in 1407 he ventured even to cross the border and to threaten Worcester. The threat was a vain one, and the Welsh army soon withdrew; but the insult gave fresh heart to Henry's foes, and in 1408 Northumberland and Bardolf again appeared in the north. Their overthrow at Bramham Moor put an end to the danger from the Percies; for Northumberland and Bardolf alike fell on the field. But Wales remained as defiant as ever. In 1409 a body of Welshmen poured ravaging into Shropshire; many of the English towns had fallen into Glendower's hands; and some of the marcher-lords made private truces with him.

415. The weakness which was produced by this ill-success in the west as well as these constant battlings with disaffection within the realm was seen in the attitude of the Lollards. Lollardry was far from having been crushed by the statute of heresy. The death of the Earl of Salisbury in the first of the revolts against Henry's throne, though his gory head was welcomed into London by a procession of abbots and bishops who went out singing psalms of thanksgiving to meet it, only transferred the leadership of the party to one of the foremost warriors of the time, Sir John Oldcastle. If we believe his opponents, and

we have no information about him save from hostile sources, he was of lowly origin, and his rise must have been due to his own capacity and services to the crown. In his youth he had listened to the preaching of Wycliffe, and his Lollardry—if we may judge from its tone in later years—was a violent fanaticism. But this formed no obstacle in his rise in Richard's reign; his marriage with the heiress of that house made him Lord Cobham; and the accession of Henry of Lancaster, to whose cause he seems to have clung in these younger days, brought him fairly to the front. His skill in arms found recognition in his appointment as sheriff of Herefordshire and as castellan of Brecknock; and he was among the leaders who were chosen in later years for service in France. His warlike renown endeared him to the king, and Prince Henry counted him among the most illustrious of his servants. The favor of the royal house was the more notable that Oldcastle was known as "leader and captain" of the Lollards. His Kentish castle of Cowling served as the headquarters of the sect, and their preachers were openly entertained at his houses in London or on the Welsh border. The convocation of 1413 charged him with being "the principal receiver, favorer, protector, and defender of them; and that, especially in the dioceses of London, Rochester, and Hereford, he hath sent out the said Lollards to preach . . . and hath been present at their wicked sermons, grievously punishing with threatenings, terror, and the power of the secular sword such as did withstand them, alleging and affirming among other matters that we, the bishops, had no power to make

any such constitutions" as the provincial constitutions in which they had forbidden the preaching of unlicensed preachers. The bold stand of Lord Cobham drew fresh influence from the sanctity of his life. Though the clergy charged him with the foulest heresy, they owned that he shrouded it "under a veil of holiness." What chiefly moved their wrath was that he "armed the hands of laymen for the spoil of the church." The phrase seems to hint that Oldcastle was the mover in the repeated attempts of the commons to supply the needs of the state by a confiscation of church property. In 1404 they prayed that the needs of the kingdom might be defrayed by a confiscation of church lands, and though this prayer was fiercely met by Archbishop Arundel it was renewed in 1410. The commons declared as before that, by devoting the revenues of the prelates to the service of the state, maintenance could be made for 15 earls, 1500 knights, and 6000 squires, while a hundred hospitals might be established for the sick and infirm. Such proposals had been commonly made by the baronial party with which the house of Lancaster had in former days been connected, and hostile as they were to the church as an establishment they had no necessary connection with any hostility to its doctrines. But a direct sympathy with Lollardism was seen in the further proposals of the commons. They prayed for the abolition of episcopal jurisdiction over the clergy and for a mitigation of the statute of heresy.

416. But formidable as the movement seemed it found a formidable opponent. The steady fighting

of Prince Henry had at last met the danger from Wales, and Glendower, though still unconquered, saw district after district submit again to English rule. From Wales the prince returned to bring his will to bear on England itself. It was through his strenuous opposition that the proposals of the commons in 1410 were rejected by the lords. He gave at the same moment a more terrible proof of his loyalty to the church in personally assisting at the burning of a layman, Thomas Badby, for a denial of transubstantiation. The prayers of the sufferer were taken for a recantation, and the prince ordered the fire to be plucked away. But when the offer of life and a pension failed to break the spirit of the Lollard, Henry pitilessly bade him be hurled back to his doom. The prince was now the virtual ruler of the realm. His father's earlier popularity had disappeared amid the troubles and heavy taxation of his reign. He was already a victim to the attack of epilepsy which brought him to the grave; and in the opening of 1410 the parliament called for the appointment of a continual council. The council was appointed, and the prince placed at its head. His energy was soon seen in a more active interposition in the affairs of France. So bitter had the hatred grown between the Burgundian and Armagnac parties that both in turn appealed again to England for help. The Burgundian alliance found favor with the council. In August, 1411, the Duke of Burgundy offered his daughter in marriage to the prince as the price of English aid, and 4000 men, with Lord Cobham among their leaders, were sent, to join his forces at Paris. Their help enabled

Duke John to bring his opponents to battle at St. Cloud, and to win a decisive victory in November. But already the king was showing himself impatient of the council's control; and the parliament significantly prayed that, "as there had been a great murmur among your people that you have had in your heart a heavy load against some of your lieges come to this present parliament," they might be formally declared to be "faithful lieges and servants." The prayer was granted, but, in spite of the support which the houses gave to the prince, Henry the Fourth was resolute to assert his power. At the close of 1411 he declared his will to stand in as great freedom, prerogative, and franchise as any of his predecessors had done, and annulled on that ground the appointment of the Continual Council.

417. The king's blow had been dealt at the instigation of his queen, and it seems to have been prompted as much by a resolve to change the outer policy which the prince had adopted as to free himself from the council. The dismissal of the English troops by John of Burgundy after his victory at St. Cloud had irritated the English court; and the Duke of Orleans took advantage of this turn of feeling to offer Catharine, the French king's daughter in marriage to the prince, and to promise the restoration of all that England claimed in Guienne and Poitou. In spite of the efforts of the prince and the Duke of Burgundy a treaty of alliance with Orleans was signed on these terms in May, 1412, and a force under the king's second son, the Duke of Clarence, disembarked at La Hogue. But the very profusion of the

Orleanist offers threw doubt on their sincerity. The duke was only using the English aid to put a pressure on his antagonist, and its landing in August at once brought John of Burgundy to a seeming submission. While Clarence penetrated by Normandy and Maine into the Orleanois, and a second English force sailed for Calais, both the French parties joined in pledging their services to King Charles "against his adversary of England." Before this union Clarence was forced in November to accept promise of payment for his men from the Duke of Orleans and to fall back on Bordeaux. The failure, no doubt, gave fresh strength to Prince Henry. In the opening of 1412 he had been discharged from the council and Clarence set in his place at its head; he had been defeated in his attempts to renew the Burgundian alliance, and had striven in vain to hinder Clarence from sailing. The break grew into an open quarrel. Letters were sent into various counties refuting the charges of the prince's detractors, and in September Henry himself appeared before his father, with a crowd of his friends and supporters, demanding the punishment of those who accused him. The charges made against him were that he sought to bring about the king's removal from the throne; and "the great recourse of people unto him, of which his court was at all times more abundant than his father's," gave color to the accusation. Henry the Fourth owned his belief in these charges, but promised to call a parliament for his son's vindication; and the parliament met in the February of 1413. But a new attack of epilepsy had weakened the king's strength; and

though galleys were gathered for a crusade which he had vowed he was too weak to meet the houses on their assembly. If we may trust a charge which was afterwards denied, the king's half-brother, Bishop Henry of Winchester, one of the Beaufort children of John of Gaunt, acting in secret co-operation with the prince, now brought the peers to pray Henry to suffer his son to be crowned in his stead. The king's refusal was the last act of a dying man. Before the end of March he breathed his last in the "Jerusalem Chamber" within the abbot's house at Westminster; and the prince obtained the crown which he had sought.

418. The removal of Archbishop Arundel from the chancellorship, which was given to Henry Beaufort of Winchester, was among the first acts of Henry the Fifth; and it is probable that this blow at the great foe of the Lollards gave encouragement to the hopes of Oldcastle. He seized the opportunity of the coronation in April to press his opinions on the young king, though probably rather with a view to the plunder of the church than to any directly religious end. From the words of the clerical chroniclers it is plain that Henry had no mind as yet for any open strife with either party, and that he quietly put the matter aside. He was, in fact, busy with foreign affairs. The Duke of Clarence was recalled from Bordeaux, and a new truce concluded with France. The policy of Henry was clearly to look on for awhile at the shifting politics of the distracted kingdom. Soon after his accession another revolution in Paris gave the charge of the mad King Charles,

and with it the nominal government of the realm, to the Duke of Orleans; and his cause derived fresh strength from the support of the young dauphin, who was afterwards to play so great a part in the history of France as Charles the Seventh. John of Burgundy withdrew to Flanders, and both parties again sought Henry's aid. But his hands were tied as yet by trouble at home. Oldcastle was far from having abandoned his projects, discouraged as they had been by his master; while the suspicions of Henry's favor to the Lollard cause which could hardly fail to be roused by his favor to the Lollard leader only spurred the bold spirit of Arundel to energetic action. A council of bishops gathered in the summer to denounce Lollardry and at once called on Henry to suffer Oldcastle to be brought to justice. The king pleaded for delay in the case of one who was so close a friend, and strove personally to convince Lord Cobham of his errors. All, however, was in vain, and Oldcastle withdrew to his castle of Cowling, while Arundel summoned him before his court and convicted him as a heretic. His open defiance at last forced the king to act. In September a body of royal troops arrested Lord Cobham and carried him to the Tower; but his life was still spared, and after a month's confinement his imprisonment was relaxed on his promise of recantation. Cobham, however, had now resolved on open resistance. He broke from the Tower in November, and from his hiding-place organized a vast revolt. At the opening of 1414 a secret order summoned the Lollards to assemble in St. Giles's Fields outside London. We gather, if

not the real aims of the rising, at least the terror it caused, from Henry's statement that its purpose was "to destroy himself, his brothers, and several of the spiritual and temporal lords;" from Cobham's later declaration it is probable that the pretext of the rising was to release Richard, whom he asserted to be still alive, and to set him again on the throne. But the vigilance of the young king prevented the junction of the Lollards within the city with their confederates without, and these as they appeared at the place of meeting were dispersed by the royal troops.

419. The failure of the rising only increased the rigor of the law. Magistrates were directed to arrest all heretics and hand them over to the bishops; a conviction of heresy was made to entail forfeiture of blood and estate; and the execution of thirty-nine prominent Lollards as traitors gave terrible earnest of the king's resolve to suppress their sect. Oldcastle escaped, and for four years longer strove to rouse revolt after revolt. He was at last captured on the Welsh border and burned as a heretic; but from the moment when his attempt at revolt was crushed in St. Giles's Fields the dread of Lollardry was broken and Henry was free to take a more energetic course of policy on the other side the sea. He had already been silently preparing for action by conciliatory measures, by restoring Henry Percy's son to the earldom of Northumberland, by the release of the Earl of March, and by the solemn burial of Richard the Second at Westminster. The suppression of the Lollard revolt was followed by a demand for the res-

toration of the English possessions in France, and by alliance and preparations for war. Burgundy stood aloof in a sullen neutrality, and the Duke of Orleans, who was now virtually ruler of the French kingdom, in vain proposed concession after concession. All negotiation, indeed, broke down when Henry formally put forward his claim on the crown of France. No claim could have been more utterly baseless, for the parliamentary title by which the house of Lancaster held England could give it no right over France, and the strict law of hereditary succession which Edward asserted could be pleaded, if pleaded at all, only by the house of Mortimer. Not only the claim indeed, but the very nature of the war itself, was wholly different from that of Edward the Third. Edward had been forced into the struggle against his will by the ceaseless attacks of France, and his claim of the crown was little but an afterthought to secure the alliance of Flanders. The war of Henry, on the other hand, though in form a mere renewal of the earlier struggle on the close of the truce made by Richard the Second, was in fact an aggression on the part of a nation tempted by the helplessness of its opponents and galled by the memory of former defeat. Its one excuse lay in the attacks which France for the past fifteen years had directed against the Lancastrian throne, its encouragement of every enemy without and of every traitor within. Henry may fairly have regarded such a ceaseless hostility, continued even through years of weakness, as forcing him in sheer self-defense to secure his realm against the weightier attack which

might be looked for, should France recover her strength.

420. In the summer of 1415 the king prepared to sail from Southampton, when a plot reminded him of the insecurity of his throne. The Earl of March was faithful; but he was childless, and his claim would pass at his death through a sister who had wedded the Earl of Cambridge, a son of the Duke of York, to her child Richard, the duke who was to play so great a part in the war of the Roses. It was to secure his boy's claims that the Earl of Cambridge seized on the king's departure to conspire with Lord Scrope and Sir Thomas Grey to proclaim the Earl of March king. The plot, however, was discovered and the plotters beheaded before the king sailed in August for the Norman coast. His first exploit was the capture of Harfleur. Dysentery made havoc in his ranks during the siege, and it was with a mere handful of men that he resolved to insult the enemy by a daring march like that of Edward upon Calais. The discord, however, on which he probably reckoned for security, vanished before the actual appearance of the invaders in the heart of France; and when his weary and half-starved force succeeded in crossing the Somme it found 60,000 Frenchmen encamped on the field of Agincourt right across its line of march. Their position, flanked on either side by woods, but with a front so narrow that the dense masses were drawn up thirty men deep, though strong for purposes of defense was ill suited for attack; and the French leaders, warned by the experience of Crécy and Poitiers, resolved to await the

English advance. Henry, on the other hand, had no choice between attack and unconditional surrender. His troops were starving, and the way to Calais lay across the French army. But the king's courage rose with the peril. A knight in his train wished that the thousands of stout warriors lying idle that night in England had been standing in his ranks. Henry answered with a burst of scorn. "I would not have a single man more," he replied. "If God give us the victory, it will be plain we owe it to his grace. If not, the fewer we are, the less loss for England." Starving and sick as they were, the handful of men whom he led shared the spirit of their king. As the chill rainy night passed away he drew up his army on the twenty-fifth of October and boldly gave battle. The English archers bared their arms and breasts to give fair play to "the crooked stick and the gray goose wing," but for which—as the rhyme ran—"England were but a fling," and with a great shout sprang forward to the attack. The sight of their advance roused the fiery pride of the French; the wise resolve of their leaders was forgotten, and the dense mass of men-at-arms plunged heavily forward through miry ground on the English front. But at the first sign of movement Henry had halted his line, and fixing in the ground the sharpened stakes with which each man was furnished, his archers poured their fatal arrow flights into the hostile ranks. The carnage was terrible, for though the desperate charges of the French knighthood at last drove the English archers to the neighboring woods, from the skirt of these woods they were still able to

pour their shot into the enemy's flanks, while Henry with the men-at-arms around him flung himself on the French line. In the terrible struggle which followed, the king bore off the palm of bravery: he was felled once by a blow from a French mace, and the crown of his helmet was cleft by the sword of the Duke of Alençon; but the enemy was at last broken, and the defeat of the main body of the French was followed by the rout of their reserve. The triumph was more complete, as the odds were even greater than at Crécy. Eleven thousand Frenchmen lay dead on the field, and more than a hundred princes and great lords were among the fallen.

421. The immediate result of the battle of Agincourt was small, for the English army was too exhausted for pursuit, and it made its way to Calais only to return to England. Through 1416 the war was limited to a contest for the command of the channel, till the increasing bitterness of the strife between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, and the contest of John of Burgundy to conclude an alliance encouraged Henry to resume his attempt to recover Normandy. Whatever may have been his aim in this enterprise—whether it were as has been suggested, to provide a refuge for his house, should its power be broken in England, or simply to acquire a command of the seas—the patience and skill with which his object was accomplished raise him high in the rank of military leaders. Disembarking in July, 1417, with an army of 40,000 men near the mouth of the Touque, he stormed

Caen, received the surrender of Bayeux, reduced Alençon and Falaise, and detaching his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, in the spring of 1418 to occupy the Côtentin made himself master of Avranches and Domfront. With Lower Normandy wholly in his hands, he advanced upon Evreux, captured Louviers, and seizing Pont de l'Arche, threw his troops across the Seine. The end of these masterly movements was now revealed. Rouen was at this time the largest and wealthiest of the towns of France; its walls were defended by a powerful artillery; Alan Blanchard, a brave and resolute patriot, infused the fire of his own temper into the vast population; and the garrison, already strong, was backed by 15,000 citizens in arms. But the genius of Henry was more than equal to the difficulties with which he had to deal. He had secured himself from an attack on his rear by the reduction of Lower Normandy, his earlier occupation of Harfleur severed the town from the sea, and his conquest of Pont de l'Arche cut it off from relief on the side of Paris. Slowly but steadily the king drew his lines of investment round the doomed city; a flotilla was brought up from Harfleur, a bridge of boats thrown over the Seine above the town, the deep trenches of the besiegers protected by posts, and the desperate sallies of the garrison stubbornly beaten back. For six months Rouen held resolutely out, but famine told fast on the vast throng of country folk who had taken refuge within its walls: 12,000 of these were at last thrust out of the city gates, but the cold policy of the conqueror refused them pas-

sage, and they perished between the trenches and the walls. In the hour of their agony women gave birth to infants, but even the newborn babes which were drawn up in baskets to receive baptism were lowered again to die on their mothers' breasts. It was little better within the town itself. As winter drew on one-half of the population wasted away. "War," said the terrible king, "has three hand-maidens ever waiting on her, fire, blood, and famine, and I have chosen the meekest maid of the three." But his demand of unconditional surrender nerved the citizens to a resolve of despair; they determined to fire the city and fling themselves in a mass on the English lines; and Henry, fearful lest his prize should escape him at the last, was driven to offer terms. Those who rejected a foreign yoke were suffered to leave the city, but his vengeance reserved its victim in Alan Blanchard, and the brave patriot was, at Henry's orders, put to death in cold blood.

422. A few sieges completed the reduction of Normandy. The king's designs were still limited to the acquisition of that province; and pausing in his career of conquest, he strove to win its loyalty by a remission of taxation and a redress of grievances, and to seal its possession by a formal peace with the French crown. The conferences, however, which were held for this purpose at Pontoise in 1419, failed through the temporary reconciliation of the French factions, while the length and expense of the war began to rouse remonstrance and discontent at home. The king's difficulties were at their height when the assassination of John of Burgundy, at Montereau in

the very presence of the dauphin, with whom he had come to hold conference, rekindled the fires of civil strife. The whole Burgundian party with the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, at its head, flung itself in a wild thirst for revenge into Henry's hands. The mad king, Charles the Sixth, with his queen and daughters were in Philip's power; and in his resolve to exclude the dauphin from the throne the duke stooped to buy English aid by giving Catharine, the eldest of the French princesses, in marriage to Henry, by conferring on him the regency during the life of Charles, and recognizing his succession to the crown at that sovereign's death. A treaty which embodied these terms was solemnly ratified by Charles himself in a conference at Troyes in May, 1420; and Henry, who in his new capacity of regent, undertook to conquer in the name of his father-in-law the territory held by the dauphin, reduced the towns of the Upper Seine and at Christmas entered Paris in triumph side by side with the king. The states-general of the realm were solemnly convened to the capital; and strange as the provisions of the treaty of Troyes must have seemed, they were confirmed without a murmur. Henry was formally recognized as the future sovereign of France. A defeat of his brother Clarence at Baugé in Anjou in the spring of 1421 called him back to the war. His re-appearance in the field was marked by the capture of Dreux, and a repulse before Orleans was redeemed in the summer of 1422 by his success in the long and obstinate siege of Meaux. At no time had the fortunes of Henry reached a higher pitch than at the moment

when he felt the touch of death. In the month which followed the surrender of Meaux he fell ill at Corbeuil; the rapidity of his disease baffled the skill of the physicians; and at the close of August, with a strangely characteristic regret that he had not lived to achieve the conquest of Jerusalem, the great conquerer passed away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WARS OF THE ROSES.

1422—1461.

423. AT the moment when death so suddenly stayed his course, the greatness of Henry the Fifth had reached its highest point. In England his victories had hushed the last murmurs of disaffection. The death of the Earl of Cambridge, the childhood of his son, removed all danger from the claims of the house of York. The ruin of Lord Cobham, the formal condemnation of Wycliffe's doctrines in the council of Constance, broke the political and the religious strength of Lollardry. Henry had won the church by his orthodoxy, the nobles by his warlike prowess, the whole people by his revival of the glories of Crécy and Poitiers. In France his cool policy had transformed him from a foreign conqueror into a legal heir to the crown. The king was in his hands, the queen devoted to his cause, the Duke of Burgundy was his ally, his title of regent and of successor to the throne rested on the formal recognition of

the estates of the realm. Although southern France still clung to the dauphin, the progress of Henry to the very moment of his death promised a speedy mastery of the whole country. His European position was a commanding one. Lord of the two great western kingdoms, he was linked by close ties of blood with the royal lines of Portugal and Castile; and his restless activity showed itself in his efforts to procure the adoption of his brother John as her successor by the Queen of Naples and in the marriage of a younger brother, Humphrey, with Jacqueline, the Countess of Holland and Hainault. Dreams of a vaster enterprise filled the soul of the great conqueror himself; he loved to read the story of Godfrey of Bouillon, and cherished the hope of a crusade which should beat back the Ottoman, and again rescue the Holy Land from heathen hands. Such a crusade might still have saved Constantinople, and averted from Europe the danger which threatened it through the century that followed the fall of the imperial city. Nor was the enterprise a dream in the hands of the cool, practical warrior and ruler of whom a contemporary could say: "He transacts all his affairs himself; he considers well before he undertakes them; he never does anything fruitlessly."

424. But the hopes of far-off conquests found a sudden close in Henry's death. His son, Henry the Sixth of England, was a child of but nine months old; and though he was peacefully recognized as king in his English realm, and as heir to the throne in the realm of France, his position was a very dif-

ferent one from his father's. The death of King Charles, indeed, two months after that of his son-in-law, did little to weaken it, and at first nothing seemed lost. The dauphin at once proclaimed himself Charles the Seventh of France: but Henry was owned as sovereign over the whole of the territory which Charles had actually ruled; and the incursions which the partisans of Charles, now reinforced by Lombard soldiers from the Milanese, and by 4,000 Scots under the Earl of Douglas, made with fresh vigor across the Loire were easily repulsed by Duke John of Bedford, the late king's brother, who had been named in his will regent of France. In genius for war as in political capacity, John was hardly inferior to Henry himself. Drawing closer his alliance with the Duke of Burgundy by marriage with that prince's sister, and holding that of Brittany by a patient diplomacy, he completed the conquest of northern France, secured his communications with Normandy by the capture of Meulan, and made himself master of the line of the Yonne by a victory near Auxerre. In 1424 the constable of Buchan pushed from the Loire to the very borders of Normandy to arrest his progress, and attacked the English army at Verneuil. But a repulse hardly less disastrous than that of Agincourt left a third of the French knighthood on the field; and the regent was preparing to cross the Loire for a final struggle with "the King of Bourges," as the English in mockery called Charles the Seventh, when his career of victory was broken by troubles at home.

425. In England the Lancastrian throne was still

too newly established to remain unshaken by the succession of a child of nine months old. Nor was the younger brother of Henry the Fifth, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, whom the late king's will named as regent of the realm, a man of the same noble temper as the Duke of Bedford. Intellectually, the figure of Humphrey is one of extreme interest, for he is the first Englishman in whom we can trace the faint influence of that revival of knowledge which was to bring about the coming renaissance of the western world. Humphrey was not merely a patron of poets and men of letters, of Lydgate and William of Worcester, and Abbot Whethamstede of St. Alban's, as his brother and other princes of the day had been, but his patronage seems to have sprung from a genuine interest in learning itself. He was a zealous collector of books, and was able to bequeath to the University of Oxford a library of 130 volumes. A gift of books indeed was a passport to his favor, and before the title of each volume he possessed the duke wrote words which expressed his love of them, "*moun bien mondain*," "*my worldly goods!*" Lydgate tells us how "*notwithstanding his state and dignyte, his corage never doth appalle to studie in books of antiquitie.*" His studies drew him to the revival of classic learning, which was becoming a passion across the Alps. One wandering scholar from Forli, who took the pompous name of Titus Livius, and who wrote at his request a biography of Henry the Fifth, Humphrey made his court poet and orator. The duke probably aided Poggio Bracciolini in his search for classical manuscripts

when he visited England in 1420. Leonardo Aretino, one of the scholars who gathered about Cosmo de Medici, dedicated to him a translation of the "Politics" of Aristotle, and when another Italian scholar sent him a fragment of a translation of Plato's "Republic," the duke wrote to beg him to send the rest. But with its love of learning, Humphrey combined the restlessness, the immorality, the selfish, boundless ambition, which characterized the age of the renaissance. His life was sullied by sensual excesses, his greed of power shook his nephew's throne. So utterly was he already distrusted that the late king's nomination of him as regent was set aside by the royal council, and he was suffered only to preside at its deliberations with the nominal title of protector during Bedford's absence. The real direction of affairs fell into the hands of his uncle, Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, a legitimated son of John of Gaunt by his mistress, Catharine Swynford.

426. Two years of useless opposition disgusted the duke with this nominal protectorship, and in 1424 he left the realm to push his fortunes in the Netherlands. Jacqueline, the daughter and heiress of William, Count of Holland and Hainault, had originally wedded John, Duke of Brabant; but after a few years of strife she had procured a divorce from one of the three claimants who now disputed the papacy, and at the close of Henry the Fifth's reign she had sought shelter in England. At his brother's death the Duke of Gloucester avowed his marriage with her, and adopted her claims as his own. To support them in arms, however, was to alienate Philip of

Burgundy, who was already looking forward to the inheritance of his childless nephew, the Duke of Brabant; and as the alliance with Burgundy was the main strength of the English cause in France, neither Bedford, who had shown his sense of its value by a marriage with the duke's sister, nor the English council were likely to support measures which would imperil or weaken it. Such considerations, however, had little weight with Humphrey; and in October, 1424, he set sail for Calais without their knowledge, with a body of 5,000 men. In a few months he succeeded in restoring Hainault to Jacqueline, and Philip at once grew lukewarm in his adherence to the English cause. Though Bedford's efforts prevented any final break, the duke withdrew his forces from France to aid John of Brabant in the recovery of Hainault and Holland. Gloucester challenged Philip to decide their claims by single combat. But the enterprise was abandoned as hastily as it had been begun. The Duke of Gloucester was already disgusted with Jacqueline and enamored of a lady in her suite, Eleanor, the daughter of Lord Cobham; and in the summer of 1425 he suddenly returned with her to England, and left his wife to defend herself as she might.

427. What really called him back was more than his passion for Eleanor Cobham, or the natural versatility of his temper; it was the advance of a rival in England to further power over the realm. This was his uncle, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. The bishop had already played a leading political part. He was charged with having spurred

Henry the Fifth to the ambitious demands of power which he made during his father's lifetime; he became chancellor on his accession; and at his death the king left him guardian of the person of his boy. He looked on Gloucester's ambition as a danger to his charge, withstood his recognition as regent, and remained at the head of the council that reduced his office of protector to a name. The duke's absence in Hainault gave fresh strength to his opponent: and the nomination of the bishop to the chancellorship marked him out as the virtual ruler of the realm. On the news of this appointment Gloucester hurried back to accept what he looked on as a challenge to open strife. The Londoners rose in his name to attack Beaufort's palace in Southwark, and at the close of 1425, Bedford had to quit his work in France to appease the strife. In the following year Gloucester laid a formal bill of accusation against the bishop before the Parliament, but its rejection forced him to a show of reconciliation, and Bedford was able to return to France. Hardly was he gone, however, when the quarrel began anew. Humphrey found a fresh weapon against Beaufort in his acceptance of the dignity of a cardinal and of a papal legate in England; and the jealousy which this step aroused drove the bishop to withdraw for a while from the council and to give place to his unscrupulous opponent.

428. Beaufort possessed an administrative ability, the loss of which was a heavy blow to the struggling regent over sea, where Humphrey's restless ambition had already paralyzed Bedford's efforts. Much of

his strength rested on his Burgundian ally, and the force of Burgundy was drawn to other quarters. Though Hainault had been easily won back on Gloucester's retreat and Jacqueline taken prisoner, her escape from prison enabled her to hold Holland for three years against the forces of the Duke of Brabant, and after his death against those of the Duke of Burgundy, to whom he bequeathed his dominions. The political strife in England itself was still more fatal in diverting the supplies of men and money which were needful for a vigorous prosecution of the war. To maintain even the handful of forces left to him Bedford was driven to have recourse to mere forays which did little but increase the general misery. The north of France indeed was being fast reduced to a desert by the bands of marauders which traversed it. The husbandmen fled for refuge to the towns, till these in fear of famine shut their gates against them. Then in their despair they threw themselves into the woods and became brigands in their turn. So terrible was the devastation that two hostile bodies of troops failed at one time even to find one another in the desolate Beauce. Misery and disease killed 100,000 people in Paris alone. At last the cessation of the war in Holland and the temporary lull of strife in England enabled the regent to take up again his long interrupted advance upon the south. Orleans was the key to the Loire; and its reduction would throw open Bourges where Charles held his court. Bedford's resources, indeed, were still inadequate for such a siege; and though the arrival of reinforce-

ments from England under the Earl of Salisbury enabled him to invest it in October, 1428, with 10,000 men, the fact that so small a force could undertake the siege of such a town as Orleans shows at once the exhaustion of England and the terror which still hung over France. As the siege went on, however, even these numbers were reduced. A new fit of jealousy on the part of the Duke of Burgundy brought about a recall of his soldiers from the siege, and after their withdrawal only 3,000 Englishmen remained in the trenches. But the long series of English victories had so demoralized the French soldiery that in February, 1429, a mere detachment of archers under Sir John Fastolfe repulsed a whole army in what was called "the battle of the herrings," from the convoy of provisions which the victors brought in triumph into the camp before Orleans. Though the town swarmed with men-at-arms not a single sally was ventured on through the six months' siege, and Charles the Seventh did nothing for its aid but shut himself up in Chinon and weep helplessly.

429. But the success of this handful of besiegers rested wholly on the spell of terror which had been cast over France, and at this moment the appearance of a peasant maiden broke the spell. Jeanne d'Arc was the child of a laborer of Domremy, a little village in the neighborhood of Vaucouleurs, on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne. Just without the cottage where she was born began the great woods of the Vosges, where the children of Domremy drank in poetry and legend from fairy ring and

haunted well, hung their flower garlands on the sacred trees, and sang songs to the "good people" who might not drink of the fountain because of their sins. Jeanne loved the forest; its birds and beasts came lovingly to her at her childish call. But at home men saw nothing in her but "a good girl, simple and pleasant in her ways," spinning and sewing by her mother's side while the other girls went to the fields, tender to the poor and sick, fond of church, and listening to the church-bell with a dreamy passion of delight which never left her. This quiet life was broken by the storm of war as it at last came home to Domremy. As the outcasts and wounded passed by the little village, the young peasant girl gave them her bed and nursed them in their sickness. Her whole nature summed itself up in one absorbing passion: she "had pity," to use the phrase forever on her lip, "on the fair realm of France." As her passion grew she recalled old prophecies that a maid from the Lorraine border should save the land; she saw visions; St. Michael appeared to her in a flood of blinding light, and bade her go to the help of the king and restore to him his realm. "Messire," answered the girl, "I am but a poor maiden; I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men-at-arms." The archangel returned to give her courage, and to tell her of "the pity" that there was in heaven for the fair realm of France. The girl wept and longed that the angels who appeared to her would carry her away, but her mission was clear. It was in vain that her father, when he heard her purpose, swore to drown her ere she should

go to the field with men-at-arms. It was in vain that the priest, the wise people of the village, the captain of Vaucouleurs, doubted and refused to aid her. "I must go to the king," persisted the peasant girl, "even if I wear my limbs to the very knees. I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side," she pleaded with a touching pathos, "for this is no work of my choosing, but I must go and do it, for my Lord wills it." "And who," they asked, "is your Lord?" "He is God." Words such as these touched the rough captain at last; he took Jeanne by the hand and swore to lead her to the king. She reached Chinon in the opening of March, but here too she found hesitation and doubt. The theologians proved from their books that they ought not to believe her. "There is more in God's book than in yours," Jeanne answered simply. At last Charles himself received her in the midst of a throng of nobles and soldiers. "Gentle dauphin," said the girl, "my name is Jeanne the maid. The heavenly king sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the heavenly king, who is the King of France."

430. Orleans had already been driven by famine to offers of surrender when Jeanne appeared in the French court, and a force was gathering under the Count of Dunois, at Blois, for a final effort at its relief. It was at the head of this force that Jeanne placed herself. The girl was in her 18th year, tall, finely formed, with all the vigor and activity of her peasant rearing, able to stay from dawn till nightfall

on horseback, without meat or drink. As she mounted her charger, clad in white armor from head to foot, with a great white banner studded with fleur-de-lis waving over her head, she seemed "a thing wholly divine, whether to see or hear." The 10,000 men-at-arms who followed her from Blois, rough plunderers whose only prayer was that of La Hire, "Sire Dieu, I pray you to do for La Hire what La Hire would do for you, were you captain-at-arms and he God," left off their oaths and foul living at her word, and gathered round the altars on their march. Her shrewd peasant humor helped her to manage the wild soldiery, and her followers laughed over their camp-fires at an old warrior who had been so puzzled by her prohibition of oaths that she suffered him still to swear by his bâton. For in the midst of her enthusiasm her good sense never left her. The people crowded round her as she rode along, praying her to work miracles, and bringing crosses and chaplets to be blest by her touch. "Touch them yourself," she said to an old dame Margaret; "your touch will be just as good as mine." But her faith in her mission remained as firm as ever. "The maid prays and requires you," she wrote to Bedford, "to work no more distraction in France, but to come in her company to rescue the Holy Sepulcher from the Turk." "I bring you," she told Dunois, when he sallied out of Orleans to meet her after her two days' march from Blois, "I bring you the best aid ever sent to any one, the aid of the king of heaven." The besiegers looked on overawed as she entered Orleans, and, riding round the walls, bade the peo-

ple shake off the fear of the forts which surrounded them. Her enthusiasm drove the hesitating generals to engage the handful of besiegers, and the enormous disproportion of forces at once made itself felt. Fort after fort was taken till only the strongest remained, and then the council of war resolved to adjourn the attack. "You have taken your counsel," replied Jeanne, "and I take mine." Placing herself at the head of the men-at-arms, she ordered the gates to be thrown open, and led them against the fort. Few as they were, the English fought desperately, and the maid, who had fallen wounded while endeavoring to scale its walls, was borne into a vineyard, while Dunois sounded the retreat. "Wait a while!" the girl imperiously pleaded, "eat and drink! so soon as my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort." It touched and the assailants burst in. On the next day the siege was abandoned, and on the eighth of May the force which had conducted it withdrew in good order to the north.

431. In the midst of her triumph Jeanne still remained the pure, tender-hearted peasant girl of the Vosges. Her first visit as she entered Orleans was to the great church, and there, as she knelt at mass, she wept in such a passion of devotion that "all the people wept with her." Her tears burst forth afresh at her first sight of bloodshed and of the corpses strewn over the battlefield. She grew frightened at her first wound, and only threw off the touch of womanly fear when she heard the signal for retreat. Yet more womanly was the purity with which she passed through the brutal warriors of a mediæval

camp. It was her care for her honor that led her to clothe herself in a soldier's dress. She wept hot tears when told of the foul taunts of the English, and called passionately on God to witness her chastity. "Yield thee, yield thee, Glasdale," she cried to the English warrior whose insults had been foulest as he fell wounded at her feet, "you called me harlot! I have great pity on your soul." But all thought of herself was lost in the thought of her mission. It was in vain that the French generals strove to remain on the Loire. Jeanne was resolute to complete her task, and while the English remained panic-stricken around Paris she brought Charles to march upon Rheims, the old crowning-place of the kings of France. Troyes and Chalons submitted as she reached them, Rheims drove out the English garrison and threw open her gates to the king.

432. With his coronation the maid felt her errand to be over. "O gentle king, the pleasure of God is done," she cried as she flung herself at the feet of Charles and asked leave to go home. "Would it were his good will," she pleaded with the archbishop as he forced her to remain, "that I might go and keep sheep once more with my sisters and my brothers; they would be so glad to see me again!" But the policy of the French court detained her while the cities of the north of France opened their gates to the newly-consecrated king. Bedford, however, who had been left without money or men, had now received reinforcements. Excluded as Cardinal Beaufort had been from the council by Gloucester's intrigues, he poured his wealth without stint into the

exhausted treasury till his loans to the crown reached the sum of half a million; and at this crisis he unscrupulously diverted an army which he had levied at his own cost for a crusade against the Hussites in Bohemia to his nephew's aid. The tide of success turned again. Charles, after a repulse before the walls of Paris, fell back behind the Loire; while the towns on the Oise submitted anew to the Duke of Burgundy, whose more active aid Bedford had bought by the cession of Champagne. In the struggle against Duke Philip Jeanne fought with her usual bravery, but with the fatal consciousness that her mission was at an end, and during the defense of Compiègne in the May of 1430 she fell into the power of the bastard of Vendôme, to be sold by her captor into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy and by the duke into the hands of the English. To the English her triumphs were victories of sorcery, and after a year's imprisonment she was brought to trial on a charge of heresy before an ecclesiastical court with the Bishop of Beauvais at its head.

433. Throughout the long process which followed, every art was used to entangle her in her talk. But the simple shrewdness of the peasant girl foiled the efforts of her judges. "Do you believe," they asked, "that you are in a state of grace?" "If I am not," she replied, "God will put me in it. If I am, God will keep me in it." Her capture, they argued, showed that God had forsaken her. "Since it has pleased God that I should be taken," she answered meekly, "it is for the best." "Will you submit," they demanded at last, "to the judgment

of the church militant?" "I have come to the King of France," Jeanne replied, "by commission from God and from the church triumphant above: to that church I submit." "I had far rather die," she ended passionately, "than renounce what I have done by my Lord's command." They deprived her of mass. "Our Lord can make me hear it without your aid," she said, weeping. "Do your voices," asked the judges, "forbid you to submit to the church and the pope?" "Ah, no! our Lord first served." Sick, and deprived of all religious aid, it was no wonder that as the long trial dragged on and question followed question Jeanne's firmness wavered. On the charge of sorcery and diabolical possession she still appealed firmly to God. "I hold to my judge," she said, as her earthly judges gave sentence against her, "to the king of heaven and earth. God has always been my Lord in all that I have done. The devil has never had power over me." It was only with a view to be delivered from the military prison and transferred to the prisons of the church that she consented to a formal abjuration of heresy. She feared in fact among the soldiery those outrages to her honor, to guard against which she had from the first assumed the dress of a man. In the eyes of the church her dress was a crime and she abandoned it; but a renewed affront forced her to resume the one safeguard left her, and the return to it was treated as a relapse into heresy which doomed her to death. At the close of May, 1431, a great pile was raised in the market-place of Rouen, where her statue stands now. Even the brutal soldiers who

snatched the hated "witch" from the hands of the clergy and hurried her to her doom were hushed as she reached the stake. One indeed passed to her a rough cross he had made from a stick he held, and she clasped it to her bosom. As her eyes ranged over the city from the lofty scaffold she was heard to murmur, "Oh, Rouen, Rouen, I have great fear lest you suffer for my death." "Yes! my voices were of God!" she suddenly cried as the last moment came; "they have never deceived me!" Soon the flames reached her, the girl's head sank on her breast, there was one cry of "Jesus!"—"We are lost," an English soldier muttered as the crowd broke up: "we have burnt a saint."

434. The English cause was indeed irretrievably lost. In spite of a pompous coronation of the boy-king Henry at Paris at the close of 1431, Bedford with the cool wisdom of his temper seems to have abandoned from this time all hope of permanently retaining France and to have fallen back on his brother's original plan of securing Normandy. Henry's court was established for a year at Rouen, a university founded at Caen, and whatever rapine and disorder might be permitted elsewhere, justice, good government, and security for trade were steadily maintained through the favored provinces. At home Bedford was resolutely backed by Cardinal Beaufort, whose services to the state as well as his real powers had at last succeeded in outweighing Duke Humphrey's opposition and in restoring him to the head of the royal council. Beaufort's diplomatic ability was seen in the truces he wrung from

Scotland, and in his personal efforts to prevent the impending reconciliation of the Duke of Burgundy with the French king. But the death of the Duke's sister, who was the wife of Bedford, severed the last link which bound Philip to the English cause. He pressed for peace: and conferences for this purpose were held at Arras in 1435. Their failure only served him as a pretext for concluding a formal treaty with Charles; and his desertion was followed by a yet more fatal blow to the English cause in the death of Bedford. The loss of the regent was the signal for the loss of Paris. In the spring of 1436 the city rose suddenly against its English garrison and declared for King Charles. Henry's dominion shrank at once to Normandy and the outlying fortresses of Picardy and Maine. But reduced as they were to a mere handful, and fronted by a whole nation in arms, the English soldiers struggled on with as desperate a bravery as in their days of triumph. Lord Talbot, the most daring of their leaders, forded the Somme with the water up to his chin to relieve Crotoy, and threw his men across the Oise in the face of a French army to relieve Pontoise.

435. Bedford found for the moment an able and vigorous successor in the Duke of York. Richard of York was the son of the Earl of Cambridge, who had been beheaded by Henry the Fifth; his mother was Anne, the heiress of the Mortimers and of their claim to the English crown as representatives of the third son of Edward the Third, Lionel of Clarence. It was to assert this claim on his son's behalf that the earl embarked in the fatal plot which

cost him his head. But his death left Richard a mere boy in the wardship of the crown, and for years to come all danger from his pretensions were at an end. Nor did the young duke give any sign of a desire to assert them as he grew to manhood. He appeared content with a lineage and wealth which placed him at the head of the English baronage; for he had inherited from his uncle the dukedom of York, his wide possessions embraced the estates of the families which united in him the houses of York, of Clarence, and of Mortimer, and his double descent from Edward the Third, if it did no more, set him near to the crown. The nobles looked up to him as the head of their order, and his political position recalled that of the Lancastrian earls at an earlier time. But the position of Richard was as yet that of a faithful servant of the crown; and as regent of France he displayed the abilities both of a statesman and of a general. During the brief space of his regency the tide of ill-fortune was stemmed; and towns and castles were recovered along the border.

436. His recall after a twelvemonth's success is the first indication of the jealousy which the ruling house felt of triumphs gained by one who might some day assert his claim to the throne. Two years later, in 1440, the duke was restored to his post, but it was now too late to do more than stand on the defensive, and all York's ability was required to preserve Normandy and Maine. Men and money alike came scantily from England—where the Duke of Gloucester, freed from the check which Bedford had

laid on him while he lived, was again stirring against Beaufort and the council. But his influence had been weakened by a marriage with his mistress, Eleanor Cobham, and in 1441 it was all but destroyed by an incident which paints the temper of the time. The restless love of knowledge which was the one redeeming feature in Duke Humphrey's character drew to him not only scholars, but a horde of the astrologers and claimants of magical powers who were the natural product of an age in which the faith of the Middle Ages was dying out before the double attack of skepticism and heresy. Among these was a priest named Roger Bolinbroke. Bolinbroke was seized on a charge of compassing the king's death by sorcery; and the sudden flight of Eleanor Cobham to the sanctuary at Westminster was soon explained by a like accusation. Her judges found that she had made a waxen image of the king and slowly melted it at a fire, a process which was held to account for Henry's growing weakness both of body and mind. The duchess was doomed to penance for her crime; she was led bare-headed and bare-footed in a white penance-sheet through the streets of London, and then thrown into prison for life. Humphrey never rallied from the blow. But his retirement from public affairs was soon followed by that of his rival, Cardinal Beaufort. Age forced Beaufort to withdraw to Winchester; and the council was from that time swayed mainly by the Earl of Suffolk, William de la Pole, a grandson of the minister of Richard the Second.

437. Few houses had served the crown more faith-

fully than that of De la Pole. His father fell at the siege of Harfleur; his brother had been slain at Agincourt; William himself had served and been taken prisoner in the war with France. But as a statesman he was powerless in the hands of the Beauforts, and from this moment the policy of the Beauforts drew England nearer and nearer to the chaos of civil war. John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and his brother, Edmund, Earl of Dorset, were now the representatives of this house. They were grandsons of John of Gaunt by his mistress, Catharine Swynford. In later days Catharine became John's wife, and his uncle's influence over Richard at the close of that king's reign was shown in a royal ordinance which legitimated those of his children by her who had been born before marriage. The ordinance was confirmed by an act of parliament, which as it passed the houses was expressed in the widest and most general terms; but before issuing this as a statute Henry the Fourth inserted provisions which left the Beauforts illegitimate in blood so far as regarded the inheritance of the crown. Such royal alterations of statutes, however, had been illegal since the time of Edward the Third; and the Beauforts never recognized the force of this provision. But whether they stood in the line of succession or no, the favor which was shown them alike by Henry the Fifth and his son drew them close to the throne, and the weakness of Henry the Sixth left them at this moment the mainstay of the house of Lancaster. Edmund Beaufort had taken an active part in the French wars, and had distinguished himself by the capture of Har-

fleur and the relief of Calais. But he was hated for his pride and avarice, and the popular hate grew as he showed his jealousy of the Duke of York. Loyal, indeed, as Richard had proved himself as yet, the pretensions of his house were the most formidable danger which fronted the throne; and with a weak and imbecile king we can hardly wonder that the Beauforts deemed it madness to leave in the duke's hands the wide power of a regent in France and the command of the armies across the sea. In 1444 York was recalled, and his post was taken by Edmund Beaufort himself.

438. But the claim which York drew from the house of Mortimer was not his only claim to the crown; as the descendant of Edward the Third's fifth son the crown would naturally devolve upon him on the extinction of the house of Lancaster, and of the direct line of that house Henry the Sixth was the one survivor. It was to check these hopes by continuing the Lancastrian succession that Suffolk in 1445 brought about the marriage of the young king with Margaret, the daughter of Duke René of Anjou. But the marriage had another end. The English ministers were anxious for the close of the war; and in the kinship between Margaret and King Charles of France they saw a chance of bringing it about. A truce was concluded as a prelude to a future peace, and the marriage treaty paved the way for it by ceding not only Anjou, of which England possessed nothing, but Maine, the bulwark of Normandy, to Duke René. For his part in this negotiation Suffolk was raised to the rank of marquis; but

the terms of the treaty and the delays which still averted a final peace gave new strength to the war-party with Gloucester at its head, and troubles were looked for in the parliament which met at the opening of 1447. The danger was roughly met. Gloucester was arrested as he rode to parliament on the charge of secret conspiracy; and a few days later he was found dead in his lodging. Suspicions of murder were added to the hatred against Suffolk; and his voluntary submission to an inquiry by the council into his conduct in the marriage treaty, which was followed by his acquittal of all blame, did little to counteract this. What was yet more fatal to Suffolk was the renewal of the war. In the face of the agitation against it the English ministers had never dared to execute the provisions of the marriage-treaty; and in 1448 Charles the Seventh sent an army to enforce the cession of Le Mans. Its surrender averted the struggle for a moment. But in the spring of 1449 a body of English soldiers from Normandy, mutinous at their want of pay, crossed the border and sacked the rich town of Fougères in Brittany. Edmund Beaufort, who had now succeeded to the dukedom of Somerset, protested his innocence of this breach of truce, but he either could not or would not make restitution, and the war was renewed. From this moment it was a mere series of French successes. In two months half Normandy was in the hands of Dunois; Rouen rose against her feeble garrison and threw open her gates to Charles; and the defeat at Fourmigny of an English force which was sent to Somerset's aid was a signal for

revolt throughout the rest of the provinces. The surrender of Cherbourg in August, 1450, left Henry not a foot of Norman ground.

439. The loss of Normandy was generally laid to the charge of Somerset. He was charged with a miserly hoarding of supplies as well as planning in conjunction with Suffolk the fatal sack of Fougères. His incapacity as a general added to the resentment at his recall of the Duke of York, a recall which had been marked as a disgrace by the dispatch of Richard into an honorable banishment as lieutenant of Ireland. But it was this very recall which proved most helpful to York. Had he remained in France he could hardly have averted the loss of Normandy, though he might have delayed it. As it was, the shame of its loss fell upon Somerset, while the general hatred of the Beauforts and the growing contempt of the king whom they ruled expressed itself in a sudden rush of popular favor towards the man whom his disgrace had marked out as the object of their ill-will. From this moment the hopes of a better and a stronger government centred themselves in the Duke of York. The news of the French successes was at once followed by an outbreak of national wrath. Political ballads denounced Suffolk as the ape with his clog that had tied Talbot, the good "dog" who was longing to grip the Frenchmen. When the Bishop of Chichester, who had been sent to pay the sailors at Portsmouth, strove to put off the men with less than their due, they fell on him and slew him. Suffolk was impeached, and only saved from condemnation by submitting him-

self to the king's mercy. He was sent into exile, but as he crossed the sea he was intercepted by a ship of Kentishmen, beheaded, and his body thrown on the sands at Dover.

440. Kent was the center of the national resentment. It was the great manufacturing district of the day, seething with a busy population, and especially concerned, with the French contest through the piracy of the Cinque Ports. Every house along its coast showed some spoil from the wars. Here, more than anywhere, the loss of the great province whose cliffs could be seen from its shores was felt as a crowning disgrace, and as we shall see from the after complaints of its insurgents, political wrongs added their fire to the national shame. Justice was ill administered; taxation was unequal and extortionate. Redress for such evils would now naturally have been sought from parliament; but the weakness of the crown gave the great nobles power to rob the freeholders of their franchise and return the knights of the shire. Nor could redress be looked for from the court. The murder of Suffolk was the act of Kentishmen, and Suffolk's friends still held control over the royal councils. The one hope of reform lay in arms; and in the summer of 1450, while the last of the Norman fortresses were throwing open their gates, the discontent broke into open revolt. The rising spread from Kent over Surrey and Sussex. Everywhere it was general and organized—a military levy of the yeomen of the three shires. The parishes sent their due contingent of armed men; we know that in many hundreds the constables formally

summoned their legal force to war. The insurgents were joined by more than a hundred esquires and gentlemen; and two great landholders of Sussex, the Abbot of Battle and the Prior of Lewes, openly favored their cause. John Cade, a soldier of some experience in the French wars, took at this crisis the significant name of Mortimer and placed himself at their head. The army, now 20,000 men strong, marched in the beginning of June on Blackheath. On the advance of the king with an equal force, however, they determined to lay their complaint before the royal council and withdraw to their homes. The "Complaint of the Commons of Kent," is of high value in the light which it throws on the condition of the people. Not one of the demands touches on religious reform. The question of villeinage and serfage finds no place in it. In the seventy years which had intervened since the last peasant rising, villeinage had died naturally away before the progress of social change. The statutes of apparel, which from this time encumber the statute-book, show in their anxiety to curtail the dress of the laborer and the farmer the progress of these classes in comfort and wealth; and from the language of the statutes themselves it is plain that as wages rose both farmer and laborer went on clothing themselves better in spite of sumptuary provisions. With the exception of a demand for the repeal of the statute of laborers, the programme of the commons was not social but political. The "Complaint" calls for administrative and economical reforms; it denounces the exclusion of the Duke of York and other nobles

from the royal councils; it calls for a change of ministry, a more careful expenditure of the royal revenue, and for the restoration of freedom of election, which had been broken in upon by the interference both of the crown and the great landowners.

441. The council refused to receive the "Complaint," and a body of troops under Sir Humphrey Stafford fell on the Kentishmen as they reached Sevenoaks. This attack, however, was roughly beaten off, and Cade's host turned back to encounter the royal army. But the royal army itself was already calling for justice on the traitors who misled the king; and at the approach of the Kentishmen it broke up in disorder. Its dispersion was followed by Henry's flight to Kenilworth and the entry of the Kentishmen into London, where the execution of Lord Say, the most unpopular of the royal ministers, broke the obstinacy of his colleagues. For three days the peasants entered the city freely, retiring at nightfall to their camp across the river; but on the fifth of July the men of London, goaded by the outrages of the rabble whom their presence roused to plunder, closed the bridge against them, and beat back an attack with great slaughter. The Kentishmen still, however, lay unbroken in Southwark, while Bishop Waynflete conferred with Cade on behalf of the council. Their "Complaint" was received, pardons were granted to all who had joined in the rising, and the insurgents dispersed quietly to their homes. Cade had striven in vain to retain them in arms; on their dispersion he formed a new force by throwing open the jails, and carried off the

booty he had won to Rochester. Here, however, his men quarreled over the plunder; his force broke up, and Cade himself was slain by Iden, the sheriff of Kent, as he fled into Sussex.

442. Kent remained restless through the year, and a rising in Wiltshire showed the growing and wide spread trouble of the time. The "Complaint" indeed had only been received to be laid aside. No attempt was made to redress the grievances which it stated or to reform the government. On the contrary, the main object of popular hate, the Duke of Somerset, was at once recalled from Normandy to take his place at the head of the royal council. York, on the other hand, whose recall had been pressed in the "Complaint," was looked upon as an open foe. "Strange language," indeed, had long before the Kentish rising been uttered about the duke. Men had threatened that he "should be fetched with many thousands," and the expectation of his coming to reform the government became so general that orders were given to close the western ports against his landing. If we believe the duke himself, he was forced to move at last by efforts to indict him as a traitor in Ireland itself. Crossing at Michaelmas to Wales, in spite of the efforts to arrest him, he gathered four thousand men on his estates and marched upon London. No serious effort was made to prevent his approach to the king; and Henry found himself helpless to resist his demand of a parliament, and of the admission of new councilors to the royal council board. Parliament met in November, and a bitter strife between York and Somerset ended in

the arrest of the latter. A demand which at once followed shows the importance of his fall. Henry the Sixth still remained childless; and Young, a member for Bristol, proposed in the commons that the Duke of York should be declared heir to the throne. But the blow was averted by repeated prorogations, and Henry's sympathies were shown by the committal of Young to the Tower, by the release of Somerset, and by his promotion to the captaincy of Calais, the most important military post under the crown. The commons, indeed, still remained resolute. When they again met, in the summer of 1451, they called for the removal of Somerset and his creatures from the king's presence. But Henry evaded the demand, and the dissolution of the houses announced the royal resolve to govern in defiance of the national will.

443. The contest between the houses and the crown had cost England her last possessions across the channel. As York marched upon London, Charles closed on the fragment of the duchy of Guienne, which still remained to the descendants of Eleanor. In a few months all was won. Bourg and Blaye surrendered in the spring of 1451, Bordeaux in the summer; two months later the loss of Bayonne ended the war in the south. Of all the English possessions in France, only Calais remained, and in 1452 Calais was threatened with attack. The news of this crowning danger again called York to the front. On the declaration of Henry's will to resist all change in the government, the duke had retired to his castle of Ludlow, arresting the whispers of his enemies with

a solemn protest that he was true liegeman to the king. But after events show that he was planning a more decisive course of action than that which had broken down with the dissolution of the parliament, and the news of the approaching siege gave ground for taking such a course at once. Somerset had been appointed captain of Calais, and as his incapacity had lost England Normandy, it would cost her—so England believed—her last fortress in France. It was said, indeed, that the duke was negotiating with Burgundy for its surrender. In the spring of 1452, therefore, York again marched on London, but this time with a large body of ordnance and an army, which the arrival of reinforcements under Lord Cobham and the Earl of Devonshire raised to over twenty thousand men. Eluding the host which gathered round the king and Somerset, he passed by the capital, whose gates had been closed by Henry's orders, and, entering Kent, took post at Dartford. His army was soon fronted by the superior force of the king, but the interposition of the more moderate lords of the council averted open conflict. Henry promised that Somerset should be put on his trial on the charges advanced by the duke, and York on this pledge disbanded his men. But the pledge was at once broken. Somerset remained in power. York found himself practically a prisoner, and only won his release by an oath to refrain from further "routs" or assemblies.

444. Two such decisive failures seemed for the time to have utterly broken Richard's power. Weakened as the crown had been by losses abroad, it was clearly

strong enough as yet to hold its own against the chief of the baronage. A general amnesty, indeed, sheltered York's adherents and enabled the duke himself to retire safely to Ludlow, but for more than a year his rival, Somerset, wielded without opposition the power Richard had striven to wrest from him. A favorable turn in the progress of the war gave fresh vigor to the government. The French forces were abruptly called from their march against Calais to the recovery of the south. The towns of Guienne had opened their gates to Charles on his pledge to respect their franchises, but the need of the French treasury was too great to respect the royal word, and heavy taxation turned the hopes of Gascony to its old masters. On the landing of an English force under Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, a general revolt restored to the English their possessions on the Garonne. Somerset used this break of better fortune to obtain heavy subsidies from parliament in 1453; but ere the twenty thousand men whose levy was voted could cross the channel, a terrible blow had again ruined the English cause. In a march to relieve Castillon on the Dordogne, Shrewsbury suddenly found himself face to face with the whole French army. His men were mown down by its guns, and the earl himself left dead on the field. His fall was the signal for a general submission. Town after town again threw open its gates to Charles, and Bordeaux capitulated in October.

445. The final loss of Gascony fell upon England at a moment when two events at home changed the whole face of affairs. After eight years of childless-

ness, the king became in October the father of a son. With the birth of this boy the rivalry of York and the Beauforts for the right of succession ceased to be the mainspring of English politics; and the crown seemed again to rise out of the turmoil of warring factions. But with the birth of the son came the madness of the father. Henry the Sixth sank into a state of idiocy, which made his rule impossible, and his ministers were forced to call a great council of peers to devise means for the government of the realm. York took his seat at this council, and the mood of the nobles was seen in the charges of misgovernment which were at once made against Somerset, and in his committal to the Tower. But Somerset was no longer at the head of the royal party. With the birth of her son, the queen, Margaret of Anjou, came to the front. Her restless despotism was quickened to action by the dangers which she saw threatening her boy's heritage of the crown; and the demand to be invested with the full royal power which she made after a vain effort to rouse her husband from his lethargy aimed directly at the exclusion of the Duke of York. The demand, however, was roughly set aside; the lords gave permission to York to summon a parliament as the king's lieutenant; and on the assembly of the houses in the spring of 1454, as the mental alienation of the king continued, the lords chose Richard protector of the realm. With Somerset in prison, little opposition could be made to the protectorate, and that little was soon put down. But the nation had hardly time to feel the guidance of Richard's steady hand when

it was removed. At the opening of 1455 the king recovered his senses, and York's protectorate came at once to an end.

446. Henry had no sooner grasped power again than he fell back on his old policy. The queen became his chief adviser. The Duke of Somerset was released from the Tower and owned by Henry in formal court as his true and faithful liegeman. York, on the other hand, was deprived of the government of Calais, and summoned with his friends to a council at Leicester, whose object was to provide for the surety of the king's person. Prominent among these friends were two earls of the house of Neville. We have seen how great a part the Nevilles played after the accession of the house of Lancaster; it was mainly to their efforts that Henry the Fourth owed the overthrow of the Percies, their rivals in the mastery of the north; and from that moment their wealth and power had been steadily growing. Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, was one of the mightiest barons of the realm; but his power was all but equaled by that of his son, a second Richard, who had won the earldom of Warwick by his marriage with the heiress of the Beauchamps. The marriage of York to Salisbury's sister, Cecily Neville, had bound both the earls to his cause, and under his protectorate Salisbury had been created chancellor. But he was stripped of this office on the duke's fall; and their summons to the council of Leicester was held by the Nevilles to threaten ruin to themselves as to York. The three nobles at once took arms to secure, as they alleged, safe access to the king's per-

son. Henry, at the news of their approach, mustered two thousand men, and with Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, and other nobles in his train, advanced to St. Albans.

447. On the 23d of May, York and the two earls encamped without the town, and called on Henry "to deliver such as we will accuse, and they to have like as they have deserved and done." The king's reply was as bold as the demand. "Rather than they shall have any lord here with me at this time," he replied, "I shall this day for their sake and in this quarrel myself live and die." A summons to disperse as traitors left York and his fellow-nobles no hope but in an attack. At eventide three assaults were made on the town. Warwick was the first to break in, and the sound of his trumpets in the streets turned the fight into a rout. Death had answered the prayer which Henry rejected, for the Duke of Somerset with Lord Clifford and the Earl of Northumberland were among the fallen. The king himself fell into the victor's hands. The three lords kneeling before him prayed him to take them for his true liegemen, and then rode by his side in triumph into London, where a parliament was at once summoned which confirmed the acts of the duke; and on a return of the king's malady again nominated York as protector. But in the spring of 1456 Henry's recovery again ended the duke's rule, and for two years the warring parties sullenly watched one another. A temporary reconciliation between them was brought about by the misery of the realm, but an attempt of the queen to arrest the Nevilles in 1458 caused a

fresh outbreak of war. Salisbury defeated Lord Audley in a fight at Bloreheath in Staffordshire, and York with the two earls raised his standard at Ludlow. But the crown was still stronger than any force of the baronage. The king marched rapidly on the insurgents, and a decisive battle was only averted by the desertion of a part of the Yorkist army and the disbanding of the rest. The duke himself fled to Ireland, the earls to Calais, while the queen, summoning a parliament at Coventry in November, pressed on their attainder. But the check, whatever its cause, had been merely a temporary one. York and Warwick planned a fresh attempt from their secure retreats in Ireland and Calais; and in the midsummer of 1460 the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, with Richard's son Edward, the young Earl of March, again landed in Kent. Backed by a general rising of the county they entered London amidst the acclamations of its citizens. The royal army was defeated in a hard-fought action at Northampton in July. Margaret fled to Scotland, and Henry was left a prisoner in the hands of the Duke of York.

448. The position of York as heir presumptive to the crown by his descent from Edmund of Langley had ceased with the birth of a son to Henry the Sixth; but the victory of Northampton no sooner raised him to the supreme control of affairs than he ventured to assert the far more dangerous claims which he had secretly cherished as the representative of Lionel of Clarence, and to their consciousness of which was owing the hostility of Henry and his queen. Such a claim was in direct opposition to

that power of the two houses whose growth had been the work of the past hundred years. There was no constitutional ground for any limitation of the right of parliament to set aside an elder branch in favor of a younger, and in the parliamentary act which placed the house of Lancaster on the throne the claim of the house of Mortimer had been deliberately set aside. Possession, too, told against the Yorkist pretensions. To modern minds the best reply to Richard's claim lay in the words used at a later time by Henry himself. "My father was king; his father also was king; I myself have worn the crown forty years from my cradle: you have all sworn fealty to me as your sovereign, and your fathers have done the like to mine. How, then, can my right be disputed?" Long and undisturbed possession as well as a distinctly legal title by free vote of parliament was in favor of the house of Lancaster. But the persecution of the Lollards, the interference with elections, the odium of the war, the shame of the long misgovernment, told fatally against the weak and imbecile king, whose reign had been a long battle of contending factions. That the misrule had been serious was shown by the attitude of the commercial class. It was the rising of Kent, the great manufacturing district of the realm, which brought about the victory of Northampton. Throughout the struggle which followed, London and the great merchant towns were steady for the house of York. Zeal for the Lancastrian cause was found only in Wales, in Northern England, and in the southwestern shires. It is absurd to suppose that the shrewd traders of Cheapside

were moved by an abstract question of hereditary right, or, that the wild Welshmen believed themselves to be supporting the right of parliament to regulate the succession. But it marks the power which parliament had gained that, directly as his claims ran in the teeth of a succession established by it, the Duke of York felt himself compelled to convene the two houses in October and to lay his claim before the lords as a petition of right. Neither oaths nor the numerous acts which had settled and confirmed the right to the crown in the house of Lancaster could destroy, he pleaded, his hereditary claim. The bulk of the lords refrained from attendance, and those who were present received the petition with hardly concealed reluctance. They solved the question, as they hoped, by a compromise. They refused to dethrone the king, but they had sworn no fealty to his child, and at Henry's death they agreed to receive the duke as successor to the crown.

449. But the open display of York's pretensions at once united the partisans of the royal house in a vigorous resistance; and the deadly struggle which received the name of the wars of the Roses from the white rose which formed the badge of the house of York and the red rose which was the cognizance of the house of Lancaster began in a gathering of the north round Lord Clifford and of the west round Henry, Duke of Somerset, the son of the duke who had fallen at St. Alban's. York, who hurried in December to meet the first with a far inferior force, was defeated and slain at Wakefield. The passion of civil war broke fiercely out on the field. The

Earl of Salisbury who had been taken prisoner was hurried to the block. The head of Duke Richard, crowned in mockery with a diadem of paper, is said to have been impaled on the walls of York. His second son, Lord Rutland, fell crying for mercy on his knees before Clifford. But Clifford's father had been the first to fall in the battle of St. Alban's which opened the struggle. "As your father killed mine," cried the savage baron, while he plunged his dagger in the young noble's breast, "I will kill you!" The brutal deed was soon to be avenged. Richard's eldest son, Edward, the Earl of March, was busy gathering a force on the Welsh border in support of his father at the moment when the duke was defeated and slain. Young as he was, Edward showed in this hour of apparent ruin the quickness and vigor of his temper, and routing on his march a body of Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross struck boldly upon London. It was on London that the Lancastrian army had moved after its victory at Wakefield. A desperate struggle took place at St. Alban's where a force of Kentishmen with the Earl of Warwick strove to bar its march on the capital, but Warwick's force broke under cover of night, and an immediate advance on the conquerors might have decided the contest. Margaret, however, paused to sully her victory by a series of bloody executions, and the rough northerners who formed the bulk of her army scattered to pillage, while Edward, hurrying from the west, appeared before the capital. The citizens rallied at his call, and cries of "Long live King Edward" rang around the handsome young

leader as he rode through the street. A council of Yorkist lords, hastily summoned, resolved that the compromise agreed on in parliament was at an end and that Henry of Lancaster had forfeited the throne. The final issue, however, now lay not with parliament, but with the sword. Disappointed of London, the Lancastrian army fell rapidly back on the north, and Edward hurried as rapidly in pursuit. On the 29th of March, 1461, the two armies encountered one another at Towton Field, near Tadcaster. In the numbers engaged, as well as in the terrible obstinacy of the struggle, no such battle had been seen in England since the fight of Senlac. The two armies together numbered nearly 120,000 men. The day had just broken when the Yorkists advanced through a thick snowfall, and for six hours the battle raged with desperate bravery on either side. At one critical moment Warwick saw his men falter, and, stabbing his horse before them, swore on the cross of his sword to win or die on the field. The battle was turned at last by the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk with a fresh force from the eastern counties, and at noon the Lancastrians gave way. A river in their rear turned the retreat into a rout, and the flight and carnage, for no quarter was given on either side, went on through the night and the morrow. Edward's herald counted more than 20,000 Lancastrian corpses on the field. The losses of the conquerors were hardly less heavy than those of the conquered. But their triumph was complete. The Earl of Northumberland was slain; the Earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire were taken and beheaded;

the Duke of Somerset fled into exile. Henry himself with his queen was forced to fly over the border and to find a refuge in Scotland. The cause of the house of Lancaster was lost; and with the victory of Towton the crown of England passed to Edward of York.

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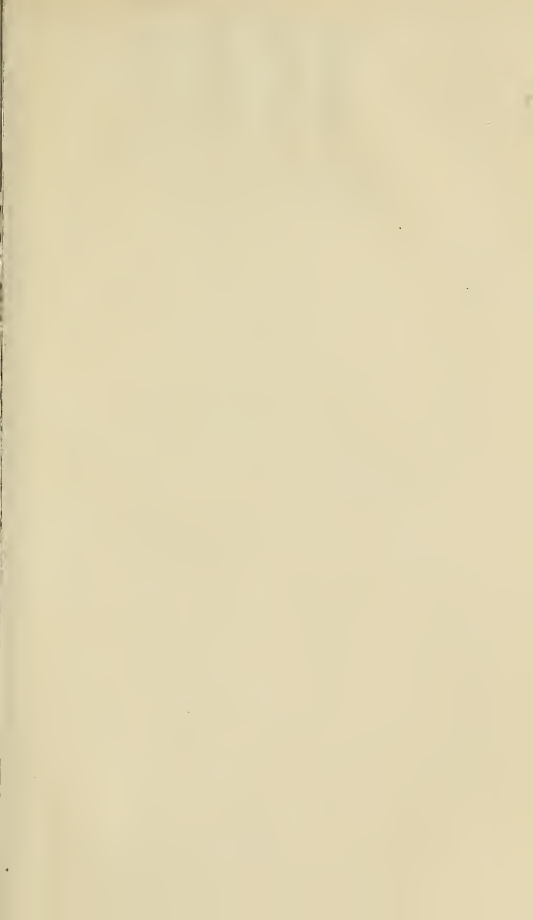
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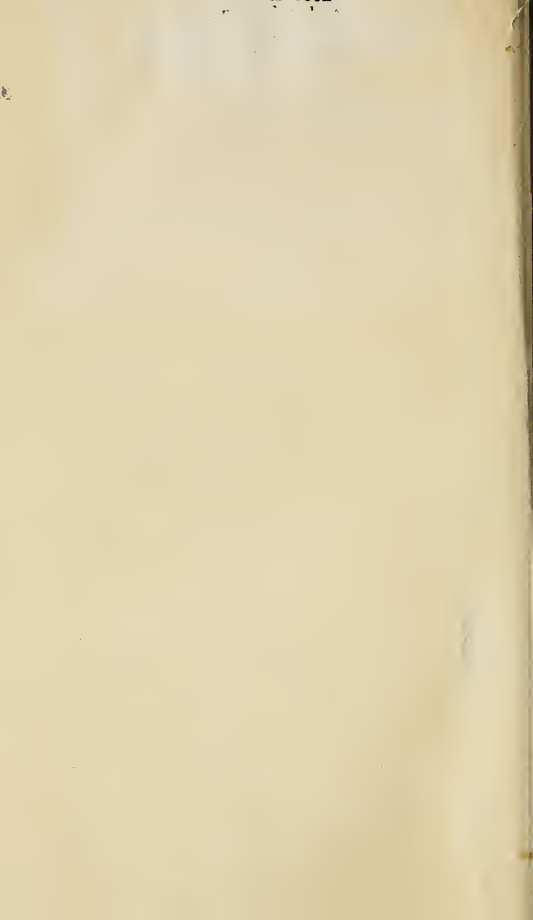
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